Tennis US Open Championship

Rusedski finally runs out of steam

Stephen Bierley at Flushing Meadow

NEW YORK, New York, so good that Greg Rusedski might have named it a thousand times if he had won the US Open title last Sunday. But the final triumphant song belonged to Pat Rafter, who defeated the British No 1 6-3, 6-2, 4-6, 7-5 with a classic display of serve and volley.

Here was the chance for Rusedski to place his name alongside the immortal Fred Perry, the last Briton to win a Grand Slam event when he triumphed here on grass 61 years ago. Nobody could have tried harder or fought more bravely.

He was outplayed for two sets but strained every muscle and tissue to win the third. Rafter deserved his victory and first Grand Slam title right enough, but Rusedski has undoubtedly played himself into the hearts of the British tennis public.

Indeed, by gaining his place in the final, which earned him $350,000, he has given British tennis a huge boost after his and Tim Henman's success in reaching the last eight at Wimbledon this year.

Rusedski may for ever blame the throat and chest virus that struck him down after his quarter-final victory over Richard Krajicek, an illness that needed specialist treatment before he defeated Jonas Bjorkman in last Saturday's five-set semi-final.

That victory, a tremendous achievement by the British No 1, was bound to take its toll as, no doubt, did the antibiotics. "The throat is OK, but he may have problems with his respiration," said Dr Gwen Korovin immediately before the final began. On several occasions Rusedski appeared to be having breathing difficulties, although in the face of tremendous adversity he managed to win the third set.

Rafter's serve-and-volley game was swiftly in the groove, putting Rusedski under immediate pressure, and the Briton's own first serve suffered in consequence as he strained for accuracy.

The first break points came in the sixth game of the opening set with Rusedski making three unforced errors and Rafter cashing in for a 4-2 lead when the British No 1 put a volley in the net.

Nerves then seized the Australian and he found himself 0-40 down on his next serve. It was a marvellously quick opportunity for Rusedski to restore his confidence and he was only a whisker away from a break of his own with a return that dropped agonisingly beyond the baseline.

When Rusedski went down in the first set it was the first time he had lost an opening set in the entire tournament. He started the second set confidently, but further mistakes on his backhand allowed Rafter in again. Rusedski crashed a loose ball into the net in his frustration and bounced his racket on the court when the Australian held for a 4-2 lead. More loose volleys saw Rafter further extend his lead and eventually take the second set with ease.



That sinking feeling . . . Britain's Greg Rusedski hangs his head after losing a point in the final PHOTOGRAPH: CLIVE BRUNSKILL

Rusedski desperately needed a change of direction and luck as the third set began. This he achieved with a wonderfully precise forehand down the line finally to end Rafter's service domination. Perhaps Rafter relaxed just a little, but it was something for Rusedski to feed on and grow.

This he did for a 3-0 lead but in the twinkling of an eye, or so it seemed, Rafter had levelled. At 5-4 Rusedski was in deep trouble again, but improbably saved two match points and then clinched the third set with a brilliant running backhand down the line.

As the sun began to set behind Manhattan's jagged skyline so Rusedski's challenge began to sink, though never quickly. He fought every single point but in the end Rafter's superior all-round play and flexibility just saw him through.

A series of blistering serves gave Rusedski a 5-4 lead, including a world-record serve of 143mph. But that was the British player's last hurrah. Rafter broke him to love the next time and then held his serve for the title with one final forehand cross-court volley.

Hingis power is decisive

UNDERSTANDABLY, as she had just reached the women's US Open final unseeded and at the first attempt, all the morning talk last Saturday and Sunday was of Venus Williams, the black teenager whom her father and coach Richard has dubbed the Cinderella of the Ghetto, *writes Stephen Bierley*.

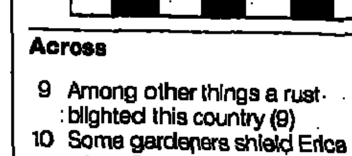
The fact that Switzerland's Martina Hingis is now the outstanding player in the world had seemingly been forgotten.

Not by Hingis, though. She won 6-0, 6-4 in one hour and two minutes for her first US Open title and her third Grand Slam of the year. She thus joined Steffi Graf, Margaret Court, Martina Navratilova, Billie Jean King and Monica Seles as only the sixth woman in the Open era to win three major titles within a calendar year.

If she had not fallen off a horse during the spring — an accident which necessitated surgery — Hingis would surely have won the French Open as well for a true Grand Slam, last achieved by Graf in 1988. Hingis, not totally fit, lost the Roland Garros final to Croatia's Iva Majoli.

"I was a little shaky when I came back [after] I fell off the horse. I could have gone for the Grand Slam, but I'm going to have many more years ahead of me," said Hingis, who earned $650,000 for this win.

Cryptic crossword by Rover



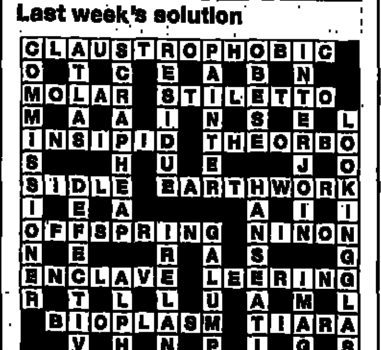
Across

9 Among other things a rust blighted this country (9)
10 Some gardeners shield Erica with a flowering tree (5)
11 The cause of a dry Spring? (7)
12 Ringing like a parrot in a cave? (7)
13 Group of workers in cutback! (6)
14 Subsequent page (9)
16 The end of education (9,6)
19 One who puts up with paste (9)
21 Gather some grain fertiliser (5)
22 Wicked Cain sat uneasily (7)
23 Bird fitting in place (7)
24 Taking candy (5)
25 Edge towards the end of tennis game (9)

Down

1 Worker struck, and so was accompanied to the station (10)
2 A European schoolboy pocketing shilling (8)
3 It follows George on register of local names (6)
4 Empty apartment (4)
5 Ferocious journalist? (5,5)
6 He gets car to start after machine breakdown (8)
7 Girl who wed in a mix-up (6)
8 Annoyance caused by men in frocks (4)
14 Versatile artist (ARCO), one of the best (10)
15 They provide room for cleaners to tidy up (10)
17 Might the successful go from this to this? (8)
18 One in post bearing stamp of approval (8)
20 Censorship? (6)
21 In the main insular (6)
22 Band of material used in dressing window (4)
23 Pennsylvania Ave without a flag! (4)

Last week's solution



Football World Cup qualifier: Scotland 4 Belarus 1

Scotland at the double

Patrick Glenn at Pittodrie

SCOTLAND dismissed Belarus with some disdain here last Sunday, but their dreams of automatic qualification for the World Cup must be haunted by a failure to do the same to Estonia in February.

Austria's victory over Sweden in Vienna last Saturday puts them one point behind the Scots at the top of Group Four, with a match in hand. Winning their last two games — home and away to Belarus — will give the Austrians the group, a cruel fate for Craig Brown's players when one remembers they have taken four points from Austria in this campaign.

Sunday's near-capacity crowd of more than 20,000 contented themselves with enjoying a commanding victory begun by Kevin Gallacher's early goal. He thumped the ball into the net after the Belarus goalkeeper Valeri Shantalosov failed to collect it neatly.

Brown's game plan had been apparent even before this fifth-minute success. His team's desire to blitz their visitors in the hope of an early goal had caused some sucking of breath among the Scottish crowd.

These tactics could never be sustained, and after they had produced the desired effect there were periods in the first half when the home support's excitement turned into apprehension.

But, after the injured McAllister and Durie had been replaced within five minutes of the start of the second period, the substitute David Hopkin and Gallacher each completed a double, with Belarus scoring their consolation goal from a soft penalty award at 3-0.

Hopkin tapped McCoist's low cut-back a little untidily over the line in the 54th minute; and Gallacher, three minutes later, beat Shantalosov in the chase to Paul Lambert's precise chip, knocked the ball away from the goalkeeper and volleyed home from eight yards.

Petr Katchouro converted the penalty before Hopkin scored the goal of the encounter, beating three defenders with ease on the edge of the area before coolly sending a low right-foot drive to the right of Shantalosov from 16 yards.

The match — its timing had caused a storm of controversy until it was moved to Sunday — had been preceded by one minute's silence and a lament from a lone piper.

Charles Stuart adds: In Group Eight the Republic of Ireland produced a scrappy display, with far too many defensive lapses, against an intimidating Iceland team, but still emerged as 4-2 victors in Reykjavik. David Connolly and Mark Kennedy, together with a brace from Roy Keane, gave Mick McCarthy's men a boost ahead of this week's crucial tie in Lithuania, which may well decide who claims second place behind runaway leaders Romania.

 Published by Guardian Publications Ltd., 164 Deansgate, Manchester, M60 2RR, and printed by WCP Commercial Printing, Leek. Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and mailing offices. Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office.

The Guardian Weekly

Vol 157, No 12
Week ending September 21, 1997

The Washington Post · Le Monde

Scotland says a resounding Yes

Guardian Reporters

SCOTTISH voters marked the 700th anniversary of William "Braveheart" Wallace's most famous victory last week by voting overwhelmingly for the historic return of their Parliament to Edinburgh — complete with tax-raising powers.

In a vote which presaged the biggest shake-up of British politics since the Irish Free State was established in 1922, 74.3 per cent of the electorate backed a Scottish parliament, with 63.5 per cent in favour of it having tax-raising powers. The turnout of 60.1 per cent was greater than pro-devolutionists had hoped for.

The Scottish National Party leader, Alex Salmond, reacted immediately to the sweeping referendum result with an apocalyptic prophecy that Scotland will be independent in his lifetime.

Mr Salmond's forecast of further constitutional upheaval was immediately countered by Tony Blair, who told a crowd of Labour party workers in Edinburgh that the overwhelming vote in favour of devolution would cement rather than break up the 290-year-old union between England and Scotland.

Mr Salmond, who has already stated his intention to lead the nationalists in the new parliament, said that he would seek a mandate to establish a separate Scottish state.

"We will shortly begin work on our manifesto but I can say right now that its centrepiece will be the pursuit of an independent Scotland. I have no doubt we will achieve that aim within my own lifetime," the 42-year-old SNP leader said.

An SNP source said: "The system has been breached. The whole system of change will speed up." Although the SNP will not be drawn on a target date for independence, there will be a push to achieve it before the symbolically important date of 2007, exactly 300 years after Scotland lost its independence.

Mr Blair, attempting to drum up support for a Yes vote in the referendum on Welsh devolution, placed the Scottish result in the context of a complete overhaul of the British constitution.

Committing himself to devolving powers from Westminster to all parts of the UK, the Prime Minister said: "This is a good day for Scotland and a good day for the United Kingdom too. The era of big, centralised government is over.

"This is a time for change, renewal and modernity. This is the way forward. I believe that we now have the chance to build a modern constitution for the whole of the United Kingdom."

All 32 of Scotland's voting regions supported the parliament, with only two — Dumfries and Galloway, and Orkney — voting marginally against the tax powers.

The result was formally announced at a ceremony in Edinburgh attended by the leaders of all four Scottish parties. The Scottish Secretary, Donald Dewar, the author of the Government's devolution white paper, said it ended once and for all the arguments about Scotland's desire for some form of home rule. "The result exceeded all my expectations. Scotland can look forward to a beginning for a new millennium," he said.

Work is already under way on a detailed Scottish parliament bill, which will be introduced and given its second reading before the end of the year. Elections will be held early in 1999 and the parliament will begin operation in January 2000 with a full legislative programme that is almost certain to include land reform.

Independent spirit . . . Scots welcome the devolution result

Jim Wallace, leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats, part of the pro-devolution alliance, dismissed the SNP argument and pointed to the success of devolution in Catalonia and Bavaria. "Those countries that have devolved have proved successful because they meet the will of the people."

For the losers, the mainly Conservative "No" camp, there was little consolation. Raymond Robertson, chairman of the Scottish Tories, said that his party would campaign vigorously at the 1999 elections.

Statute for liberty, page 10
Comment, page 12

Bosnia voters defy parties

THOUSANDS of Bosnians turned out last weekend to defy the nationalist parties by voting to reverse the results of wartime ethnic cleansing, *writes Jonathan Steele in Glamoc*. In the first local elections since the 1995 Dayton peace agreement, displaced Serbs, Muslims and Croats chose to vote heavily in their former towns, rather than the places where they now live.

Glamoc is a prime example of this trend. Before the war, 82 per cent of its 12,000 people were Serbs. They left when the Croatian army came over the border to help Bosnian Croat forces capture the region in 1995.

Several hundred Croats moved into the destroyed town and now represent over 90 per cent of the population.

But voters can register in their old municipalities, and last Saturday a bus-load of Serbs turned up. "Most of us live in Banja Luka, but we want to come home," said one.

Several hundred other Serb refugees from Glamoc registered to vote for their old town by absentee ballot. They defied the ruling party in Republika Srpska, which wants Serbs to stay in the entity.

Similar defiance appeared among ordinary Croats. To counter the wave of would-be Serb returnees, Croatian nationalists had urged the new Croat residents — most of whom had fled from Bugojno, a largely Muslim town 70km away — to register for Glamoc. But many insisted on voting in Bugojno.

The election results should be known by the weekend.

Coup foiled, page 3
Washington Post, page 17

China set for sale of the century

Andrew Higgins in Beijing

PRESIDENT Jiang Zemin, the leader of the world's last major Communist party, last week buried the shrivelled substance of Chinese socialism by sanctioning the sale of state-owned factories to breach the last citadel of an economic system already in retreat before the forces of raw capitalism.

But President Jiang drew a firm line against any parallel surrender of political power, warning that the pursuit of profit propelling China's economy must not be allowed to corrupt the party's absolute authority. "Our party can never be daunted and vanquished by any enemy," he said. "But the easiest way to capture a fortress is from within, so in no way should we destroy ourselves."

In a milestone on China's long march from a vision proclaimed triumphant by Mao Zedong in 1949, a fuzzy and often contradictory blueprint for a "new breakthrough" in economic reform prescribed an almost Thatcherite medicine for China's multitude of loss-making industries, committing a party that defines itself as the vanguard of the proletariat to share-holding and cost-cutting lay-offs.

A target for "downsizing", along with factory workers, is the People's Liberation Army, which will shed 500,000 of its nearly 3 million men over the next three years.

Mr Jiang's two-and-a-half-hour speech to more than 2,000 Communist grandees in the Great Hall of the People off Tiananmen Square opened the 15th congress, which follows the death of Deng Xiaoping in February and seals Mr Jiang's position at the summit of a party machine with 58 million members. But Mr Deng still looms over Chinese politics, his legacy cited repeatedly by Mr Jiang as justification for policies attacked as a betrayal of socialism by the hard left.

The central theme of the congress is a critical shift away from state-ownership to system of shareholding, a move that undermines the last pillar of socialist economics and threatens unemployment for China's bloated industrial workforce. Crumbling state firms employ two-thirds of China's 170 million urban workers, who cost far more than the peasant labourers whose meagre salaries and poor working conditions underpin China's growth.

More lay-offs with a promise of short-term pain for long-term gain is a risky gamble. The decay of China's state sector has already provoked unrest in several cities. More than 10,000 of China's 13,000 large and medium-sized state firms are now due to be sold, according to the official Xinhua news agency.

Nor did Mr Jiang offer any real hope of serious political reform to channel discontent. "If Jiang reaches out to democrats it will only be to throttle them," said one Western diplomat.

● An open letter purportedly written by the ousted Chinese leader, Zhao Ziyang, on Monday exposed the rigidly-scripted party congress to the unwelcome ghosts of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, piercing a carapace of silence surrounding the country's most potent political issue.

The three-page printed letter, whose authenticity could not be verified, calls on the party to reassess the 1989 democracy movement and lift the stigma of counter-revolution, saying the students never tried to topple the party, but merely wished to root out corruption.

Comment, page 12
La Monde, page 13

Austria	AS30	Malta	50c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.75
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 450	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,000	Switzerland	SF 3.30

Don't blame the left for the eugenics movement

JONATHAN Freedland's article (The dirty little secret of the old British left, September 7) one-sidedly suggests that the British eugenics movement was inspired by the founding fathers of the left and only abandoned by them in the wake of Hitler's concentration camps. The record is more complicated and more interesting than that.

My own research and that of other historians shows that there were both eugenic and anti-eugenic strains in the rise of the British labour movement. Marx and his followers (in contrast to leading Fabians) were highly critical of the kind of Social Darwinism that inspired the eugenics movement, which was far more the creature of rightwing than leftwing influences.

The strongest critics of eugenics thinking prior to the rise of Hitler were Labourite and Marxist biologists, including Lancelot Hogben and J B S Haldane. Freedland quotes Haldane's observation that biological differences exist, but not his conclusion that such differences can never justify social inequality, much less eugenics and racism.

(Dr) Gary Werskey,
Blackheath, NSW, Australia

THE lesson to be drawn from the involvement of Scandinavian socialist governments (Eugenics scandal rocks Scandinavia, August 31) and the British left of the 1930s in eugenics programmes is that racism and class élitism can distort even the noblest ideals. But Jonathan Freedland is wrong to imply that the combination of socialist beliefs and concerns about unplanned parenthood is dangerous in itself. Like Darwin's theory, these are sound views that were distorted by the proponents of forced sterilisation, as well as by the Nazis.

Today, as in the 1930s, the left calls for greater government involvement in birth-control programmes while the right and religious groups voice their opposition. Are the socialist arguments that unchecked reproduction leads to poverty for the disadvantaged and the developing world really élitism and racism in disguise?

Affordable birth control and sex education are powerful tools for governments interested in reducing both local and global inequality. The fact that similar programmes were and are used for ignoble purposes is no more a reason to avoid them than Hitler's penchant for efficient railways is an excuse for governments' modern neglect of public transport.

Jeremy Gans,
Randwick, NSW, Australia

THE horror aroused by the Swedish experience of eugenics should not blind us to the appeal that such programmes have for those who believe that society is entitled to save money and other resources by preventing undesirables from breeding.

The practice of eugenics was widespread in the United States, and was also legal in Alberta, British Columbia, Denmark and Switzerland. The relevant legislation in those countries was passed long before Hitler came to power. In Britain a departmental committee reported in 1934 that involuntary sterilisation should be permissible in certain circumstances.

Although this perversion of scientific ideas was based on flawed reasoning, the lesson remains that appeals to the interests of society should be treated with a heavy dose of scepticism when they involve the disregard of personal liberty and dignity.

Malcolm Hurwitt,
Southall, Middlesex

Stockpile of shame

AS IF the world did not already have more than enough problems on its plate, the "leader of the free world" has embarked on flouting international treaties by upgrading at vast expense its stockpile of nuclear weapons (US in secret new nuclear build-up, August 24).

Of all the hellish activities available to us, the development, manufacture and deployment of nuclear weapons attains the lowest level of depravity. The Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, achieved as a result of much hard work, goodwill and negotiating skills, provided a glimmer of hope for humanity.

In the presence of an already gross oversupply of nuclear weapons, it is difficult to avoid a sense of shame in belonging to the same species as the political, military and industrial leaders who contemplate a return to the nuclear arms race.

Bryan Furnass,
Canberra, Australia

INTERESTING. As a United States citizen residing in the US I learn about this new US nuclear arms build-up from a foreign newspaper. It appears that Dr Strangelove is alive and well among the defenders of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Z J Jania,
Harbor Springs, Michigan, USA

Fair deal for the Caribbean

THE threat facing whole island economies in the eastern Caribbean, and the power of Chiquita, a single private corporation, to manipulate governments, were issues highlighted by the latest trade dispute in the World Trade Organisation between the European Union and the United States (Caribbean banana growers facing ruin, September 14).

What has not yet been made clear is the sheer absurdity of claims that this ruling would make trade freer, as the WTO sets out to do. The reality is that the five companies that already control more than two-thirds of the EU banana market are likely to increase further their domination. But now that the WTO ruling may spell an end to protection of Caribbean producers, British consumers may soon find it impossible to buy a Windward Island banana; 20,000 banana farmers and their families may lose their livelihoods; and the consumer will have less choice. The only choice on our shelves may be a banana produced with exploited human labour and at high cost to the environment.

"Free trade" simply becomes a euphemism for "only the strong survive". The consumer should now see through the economic rhetoric and demand fair trade, not free trade.

Alistair Smith,
Norwich, Norfolk

ANY serious review of Britain's dependencies, as announced by the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook (September 7), must not avoid the core issues of citizenship and identity. The people of Montserrat are not merely imagining that they are treated as second-class citizens — the British Nationality Act in 1981 ensured that they (along with the people of Hong Kong) were presented with the anomalous and insulting fact of being British nationals with no right of abode, free movement or the right to benefits and financial assistance.

Contrast this with the way Portugal has treated its dependencies by giving them the real identity and dignity of proper nationality. This hasn't produced floods of immigrants to that country, but it has avoided the anger and chaos that characterises our relationships with some British dependencies.

Of course, amending our discredited nationality laws doesn't in itself give dignity to people who have given their loyalty and, in times of war, sometimes their lives for this country. What is also required is respect.

Claude Moraes,
Director, Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, London

A death due to irresponsibility

A 36-YEAR-OLD mother of two agrees to be driven through central Paris at 160kph, a chauffeur obligingly breaks the law. Neither the loving boyfriend nor the professional bodyguard assure her safety or their own (not to mention that of any other drivers in the vicinity), and it is all the fault of those dastardly paparazzi?

Though shocked by her death, I found the UK media's grand gestures of indignation puerile. Diana Spencer was not killed by photographers, but by illegal, reckless driving, or, if some kind of moral judgment is unavoidable, by the extravagance and irresponsibility that goes with a privileged lifestyle.

True, paparazzi are a predatory species, but they would soon be extinct without the antics of the rich, famous and spoiled, and their devoted public.

Robert D Valerio,
Oaxaca, Mexico

I WRITE as one who was utterly blind-sided by the sense of grief and personal loss I experienced and continue to experience at the death of Diana, Princess of Wales.

Britain and Canada have endured nearly two decades of corporate arrogance, boardroom and quango cronyism, executive snouts-in-the-trough, political deceit, self-serving sleaze and a general shunting aside of the less powerful and fortunate. Perhaps Diana, her frailties and errors fully acknowledged, appeared as a counterbalance to this cynical and selfish spectacle.

Michael J Reynolds,
Toronto, Canada

THE most fitting tribute to Diana would be to abolish the monarchy and let her sons lead an ordinary life. When we realise that the monarchy is composed of nothing more than ordinary people, we will understand that Britain is merely one ordinary nation among many others.

Brian Davey,
Nottingham

Briefly

I READ with interest George Monbiot's piece (Silencing of the lambs, August 31), as I had earlier enjoyed the article by Danny Penman (Gag on gene-altered food, August 17). It is important that at least some members of the media tell us about public relations firms and other agents behind the scenes: as citizens, we know little about factors influencing the information we get. This is even more important for those who have a responsibility to provide the public with an independent opinion on environmental and health issues.

Miguel Porta,
President, Spanish Society of Epidemiology, Barcelona, Spain

WHY does a killer of 3 million people have so much less public attention than Aids? Could it be that malaria is principally a poor person's disease, so it does not generate the volume of sales that attract research by pharmaceutical companies?

Richard Wilkins,
Watford, Hertfordshire

IN HIS play, On The Train (1965), the late Saunders Lewis describes a man who boards a train with the object of travelling speedily to his chosen destination. He is, therefore, pleased as it speeds non-stop through each station along the way, until he realises that it will not stop at his destination either. Desperate, he goes to the front of the train, to discover that it has no driver, and that he can neither stop it nor get off.

Is this not an excellent description of our present predicament as we travel on the global market express?

Jesse Alan Smith,
Le Doubet, France

NOW that British train fares, on average, exceed those of Switzerland, can we look forward to Swiss standards of passenger comfort and punctuality as we follow government advice to abandon our cars in favour of public transport (August 31)?

Brian P Moss,
Tamworth, Staffordshire

I WAS amused to note Nicholas Lezard's surprise at a "curious literalist house rule which means that bands with non-plural names are referred to as 'it'" (August 24). This is not exclusive to The New Rolling Stone Encyclopedia Of Rock & Roll. As anyone who has read the English-language newspapers in Japan will know, this is extended to sport ("Liverpool tied its third game") and indeed any collective noun. I am not suggesting that this is wrong. It is just that it turns my stomach. As if we didn't have enough to contend with with the above spelling of encyclopaedia.

Maison Urwin,
Tokyo, Japan

The **Guardian Weekly**

September 21, 1997 Vol 157 No 12

Annual subscription rates are £49 United Kingdom; £55 Europe inc. Eire, USA and Canada; £63 Rest of World.
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S-For foils coup attempt by Karadzic

Jonathan Steele in Sarajevo

AFTER a night of telephone calls to the White House, British troops and a cigar-smoking retired United States air-force general last week narrowly averted the biggest threat the two-year-old peace process in Bosnia has faced.

The crisis in the Bosnian Serb heartland of Banja Luka on Monday last week, when armed thugs tried to seize the presidential palace and television transmitter, was far greater than was admitted.

Interviews with local security officials, international negotiators and eyewitnesses suggest that the indicted war criminal, Radovan Karadzic, masterminded the coup attempt against his rival, the Western-backed Bosnian Serb president, Biljana Plavsic. President Slobodan Milosevic of Yugoslavia also backed the coup bid.

Just before midnight, when hundreds of thugs threatened to break barricades manned by local police, White House and state department agreement was sought for British troops to use lethal force if necessary.

The tough decision was in marked contrast to Nato behaviour in the strategic town of Brcko this month, when US troops gave way to a much smaller group of stone-throwing Bosnian Serbs.

Local police put the shift in tactics down to the different military approach adopted by British commanders in whose region Banja Luka comes, but also to the no-nonsense, tough-guy style of Jacques Klein, an ex-USAF general.

Mr Klein, deputy to the international High Representative for Bosnia, the Spaniard Carlos Westendorp, had flown to Banja Luka on Monday last week. "He found a scene of confusion," a senior police source said.

Mr Klein immediately countermanded orders from the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe to allow a rally by anti-Plavsic demonstrators to go ahead in the centre of the largest Bosnian Serb town despite the local police having discovered hand-grenades and guns in demonstrators' cars.

With a force of only 1,200 men at their disposal, the police could only afford to send a few hundred to Klasnice, 15km to the north of the city, where they decided to block the 54 buses carrying about 3,000 protesters.

Identity checks later showed that many demonstrators were out-of-uniform special police loyal to Mr Karadzic, the former Bosnian Serb president. "Our contacts advised us that Karadzic himself was behind the coup," said Predrag Ceranic, the head of state security in Banja Luka.

Angus Ramsay, the British commander of the Nato-led Stabilisation Force (S-For) in the Banja Luka sector, ordered a Dutch company from Jajce in the Bosnian Federation to cross into the Serb entity to help the three companies — two British, one Czech — that were supporting the local police.

While flackjacketed Bosnian Serb troops loyal to President Plavsic took up positions around the presidential palace, British troops thrust containers across the road from Klasnice. Tension escalated later in the evening when one of the thugs shot and seriously wounded a policeman.

Mr Klein was on the telephone several times to Momcilo Krajisnik, Mr Karadzic's closest colleague, whose rally earlier in the evening had flopped when only 200 supporters attended, thanks to the bus blockade.

After the policeman was shot, Mr Klein again telephoned Washington from the local police station. He held conference calls with the national security council's Bosnia specialist and Robert Gelbard, the special US envoy for Bosnia, as well as the commander of Nato troops in Bosnia, US General Eric Shinseki. Maj-Gen Ramsay was shuttling to and from the frontline to inspect the deteriorating situation.

Meanwhile the local police had fended off another 30 men who had sneaked round a back route at Gradiska to storm the television transmitter on Mount Kozarac.

Mr Klein twice telephoned the Yugoslav foreign minister, urging him to ring Mr Krajisnik to tell him to turn the buses round.

Around midnight Mr Klein got agreement for the Nato troops to use tear-gas or live ammunition. He telephoned Mr Krajisnik again. "Klein threatened Krajisnik that he would use all necessary force against the bus people. In fact, he threatened him before he had Washington's agreement," said an eyewitness.

Armed with the new authorisation, Mr Klein also asked Cheryl Plumridge, the British head of the High Representative's Banja Luka office, to go round to the Hotel Bosna to see Mr Krajisnik's people.

Realising S-For meant business, Mr Krajisnik backed down. He promised to get the buses and people moved back to eastern Bosnia. Only at 4am, when word came that the buses were well and truly on their way, did Mr Klein and Maj-Gen Ramsay go off to bed.

Within an hour they were roused again, when the local police besieged the Hotel Bosna and disarmed and searched Mr Krajisnik's bodyguards. The new crisis captured the headlines, but what had gone on earlier was far more dangerous.

● Mr Westendorp said last week that it would be "absolutely unthinkable" to have no international military presence in the region next year, unless the situation improved dramatically.

His comments add to pressure on the US to stay on in Bosnia beyond mid-1998. President Clinton has promised Congress that the Nato-led S-For will be withdrawn next summer.

A US soldier frisks a Muslim refugee going to vote PHOTO: MLADEN ANTONOV

EU to lock exchange rates

Stephen Bates in Luxembourg

EUROPEAN Union finance ministers have decided to lock bilateral exchange rates next May, seven months before the introduction of the euro, on the same day as the EU decides which countries qualify to join monetary union.

The ministers ended a two-day summit in Mondorf, Luxembourg, last weekend, claiming that only political decisions remain to be taken about which countries will join on January 1, 1999 — putting the euro back on target for a launch in 15 months' time after a summer of political turbulence and calls for delay.

But there were early signs of future problems as the ministers disagreed about budgetary contributions and the harmonisation of taxation — issues which will probably remain unresolved into the next century.

Yves de Silguy, the currency commissioner, said the decision to lock exchange rates would increase the irreversibility and transparency of the final steps towards European monetary union (EMU) next year, and help companies prepare for it.

The plan is designed to curb speculative trading before EMU, although the method of determining bilateral rates will not be announced until May. It is expected that the locking rate will be fixed on the current average central rate within the exchange rate mechanism, as most currencies are within 2 per cent of that.

The growing confidence that the difficulties of qualifying for the single currency will be overcome follows a summer of good economic figures and Germany's latest projections that it will be able to bring its debt below 3 per cent of GDP. It will do so by excluding health-service debt from its public sector borrowing requirement, on the basis that most of the debt is privately incurred.

US shift on landmines

Martin Kettle in Washington

WHITE HOUSE officials have acknowledged that public pressure following the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, has forced a major change of policy in favour of signing an international treaty banning anti-personnel land-mines.

Until now the United States has refused to sign any treaty that constrained its continuing use of anti-personnel mines along the demilitarised zone between North and South Korea, especially when the treaty would not be signed by either of the Korean states.

But the Clinton administration has now told its allies it could sign the treaty under a compromise that would allow a nine-year moratorium before the mines are removed from the Korean peninsula.

In a report on Monday quoting an unnamed White House official, the New York Times said the policy change reflected public pressure after the princess's death for the US to be more flexible on the landmines issue. Footage of Diana with landmine victims in Angola and Bosnia was shown on US television following her death.

Washington signalled the change of policy to its military allies last weekend, following extensive lobbying by them to sign the inaugural international treaty banning the manufacture or deployment of anti-personnel mines. But the White House warned it would continue to press for significant modifications to the draft treaty before agreeing to initial it in Oslo.

On of the proposed changes, strongly opposed by some of its allies, would permit the US to deploy landmines in times of conflict. Washington wants to be able to deploy anti-tank mines, ringed by anti-personnel mines, so enemy infantry cannot disable the anti-tank devices. It argues that, because such anti-personnel mines self-destruct after several days, they would not pose an abiding threat to civilians.

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The Week

TWO inquiry reports have been published by the United States army chiefs into the sex scandals at a Maryland training base, which rocked the country last year. The findings admit numerous instances of consensual and forced sex between male drill sergeants and female recruits.

Washington Post, page 15

THE US air force temporarily grounded its fleet of more than 50 F-117A stealth fighters after four people were injured when one of the planes broke up and crashed into three houses during an air show in Maryland. The pilot ejected before the plane came down.

THE Norwegian prime minister, Thorbjoern Jagland, said his Labour government would resign after voters rebuffed him in the country's general election.

AT LEAST 60 people were killed when five carriages of a passenger train plunged from a bridge into a river near Champa town in Madhya Pradesh, India.

MORE than 10,000 people gathered in the city of Al Ain in the Gulf emirate of Abu Dhabi to witness two convicted murderers being crucified. The sentence was not carried out. Instead the two were taken to a nearby field and shot.

SAUDI Arabia has asked the United States to extradite a Saudi dissident in connection with the Khobar Towers bombing in the kingdom last year, which killed 19 US servicemen, said a Saudi news agency report.

PRESIDENT Bill Clinton's choice for the post of US ambassador to Mexico, William Weld, withdrew his nomination in the face of Congressional resistance.

AUSTRALIA is to hold a two-week convention in February in Canberra to debate whether to maintain two centuries of allegiance to the British crown or become a republic.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates September 18	Sterling rates September 8
Australia	2.2261-2.2289	2.1632-2.1658
Austria	19.90-19.92	20.15-20.17
Belgium	58.31-58.43	59.09-59.19
Canada	2.2330-2.2350	2.1868-2.1888
Denmark	10.76-10.77	10.90-10.91
France	9.50-9.51	9.63-9.64
Germany	2.8288-2.8313	2.8628-2.8662
Hong Kong	12.42-12.43	12.25-12.26
Ireland	1.0607-1.0632	1.0612-1.0631
Italy	2,758-2,761	2,789-2,793
Japan	192.95-193.14	191.65-191.82
Netherlands	3.1851-3.1882	3.2255-3.2282
New Zealand	2.5202-2.5244	2.4811-2.4847
Norway	11.65-11.66	11.77-11.78
Portugal	287.64-287.96	290.61-290.92
Spain	238.73-238.91	241.45-241.62
Sweden	12.21-12.23	12.28-12.30
Switzerland	2.3289-2.3313	2.3518-2.3542
USA	1.6046-1.6055	1.5822-1.5833
ECU	1.4438-1.4461	1.4595-1.4611

FTSE 100 Share Index down 82.3 at 4902.9. FTSE 250 Index up [illegible] at [illegible]. Gold up $1.00 at [illegible].

Colonisers bring agony to the Mount

Julian Borger in Jerusalem

IT MAY have looked like a commando raid, but it was just moving house, Jerusalem-style. Under cover of darkness, with the help of armed security guards, the Kleins, the Kallners and the Heikens settled in their new homes in the early hours of Monday.

News of their arrival was quickly broadcast from the minaret of a nearby mosque, and in minutes a crowd of their new neighbours gathered to give them a taste of what life in the East Jerusalem district of Ras al-Amoud will be like. They pelted them with stones until a contingent of Israel's paramilitary border police arrived with assault rifles and formed a protective ring around the new tenants. Home sweet home.

In Jerusalem the property market is an acknowledged field of warfare. The Palestinians want a share of the city as a future capital. Rightwing Jews are determined to stop them by colonising East Jerusalem.

Palestinian estate agents are frequent casualties in the struggle — murdered for selling Arab land to Jews — while radical Jewish groups plan the takeover of Palestinian districts with military thoroughness and aggression.

The Kleins, Kallners and Heikens are the latest footsoldiers in the battle for the Holy City. They volunteered to settle on the cutting edge of Zionism, on the slopes of the Mount of Olives looking down on the rubbish dumps which surround the Old City.

Their tenancies were signed last Sunday afternoon by Irving Moskowitz, a retired physician and bingo impresario from Florida, who is financing this latest push into East Jerusalem by covertly buying up Ras al-Amoud. He plans to settle 70 families.

Gidalea Klein, one of the new occupants, insisted that his Arab predecessors had been bought out and had left of their own accord.

"Why can't Arabs live with the fact that Jerusalem belongs to the Jews?" the 25-year-old theology student said. "Why can't we rent a house in this city like any other city?"

The Israeli prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, had announced well-publicised concessions to the Palestinian Authority the previous night, and was clearly furious to find his agenda and the morning headlines hijacked.

He said the settlers' arrival was "not good for the State of Israel", adding: "We think on the sensitive issues we should be the ones who are making the decisions, not manoeuvred into them."

The United States secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, en route home from her Middle East mission, said moving the families into Ras al-Amoud was "not a helpful act".

The three families expressed surprise at the crush of journalists, celebrating rightwing activists and angry peace campaigners who pushed their way into the front garden. "Why don't the Arabs like us?" asked Bitya Klein, Gidalea's wife, who had been hit on the back by a stone the night before.

Yael Dayan, a well-known liberal and the daughter of Israel's most famous general, sat down next to Mrs Klein and gave her a televised telling off. "I think it's great naivety on your part to say this is not political. Don't you think you're inviting terror . . . You don't have the right to take the fate of all of us in your own hands," she said.

Outside a crowd of Israeli peace campaigners had assembled with placards, including one saying: "Moskowitz go home. Don't play bingo with our lives."

At the other end of the street, local Palestinians watched disconsolately. "Even though people here know they can do nothing against machine-guns and settlers with machine-guns, there will be more violence, more explosions now," said one. "It is up to Netanyahu. He says he's against it. If he acts he can prevent the bloodshed."

● The Gulf Co-operation Council, whose members include Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates, on Monday warned that it would withdraw its support from the peace process unless Israel honoured the peace accords with the Palestinians.

Israel yields to Albright's plea on settlers

Julian Borger in Jerusalem

ISRAEL announced the easing of its economic blockade of the Palestinian territories last Sunday as a "goodwill step" in return for counter-terrorist measures taken by the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat.

The Israeli government said it would release half the tax revenues it had withheld from Mr Arafat's Palestinian Authority (PA) since the July suicide bombing in Jerusalem by Islamists in Hamas.

And at dawn on Monday the Israeli army lifted its blockade around Palestinian-run towns on the West Bank. The end of this "internal closure" will allow local residents more mobility on the West Bank, but Palestinian workers will not be allowed to go back to their jobs in Israel.

The easing of restrictions came three days after the visit of the US secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, who urged Mr Arafat to take tougher action against Hamas and the Israeli government to improve Palestinian living conditions.

Mrs Albright asked Israel to halt the construction of Jewish settlements on Arab land and other controversial policies, saying a "time-out" would help foster Middle East peace.

Her remarks were welcomed by Palestinian officials who had criticised her first Middle East peace mission for being pro-Israeli.

She also singled out government confiscation of Palestinian land, the demolition of Arab houses, and the confiscation of Palestinian identity documents as acts seen by Palestinians as provocative. "We believe that a time-out from these kind of unilateral actions will create a climate in which . . . an accelerated approach can succeed in achieving a final Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement."

In an earlier encounter with Mr Arafat, Mrs Albright confirmed that the issue of Israeli security was at the centre of her agenda. She questioned the seriousness of Palestinian efforts to combat terrorism and warned that there was "a long way to go" before the crisis in Israeli-Arab relations could be resolved.

At a joint press conference, Mr Arafat repeatedly condemned the use of violence and offered his condolences to the victims of two recent suicide bombings in Jerusalem. But Mrs Albright indicated that she was unimpressed with his attempts so far to catch the orchestrators of the violence. "To be effective, the Palestinian Authority fight must be comprehensive, relentless and sustained," she said.

Earlier, the Palestinian police detained more than 100 Islamic activists from the Hamas organisation, which claimed responsibility for the recent suicide bombings. The Israeli government had derided their efforts, with Israeli intelligence sources describing the detainees as "small fry".

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Zapatistas warn peace is far off

Phil Gunson in Mexico City

MEXICO'S Zapatista guerrillas are not about to disarm and peace in the southern state of Chiapas remains far off, their leader, Subcomandante Marcos, said last weekend.

His statement was delivered in Mexico City by a contingent of more than 1,000 masked but unarmed members at the end of a week-long bus journey from Chiapas to press their demands for indigenous rights.

In a communiqué described by the government as "virulent" and read out at the founding congress of the Zapatista National Liberation Front (FZLN), a civilian "sister organisation" of the rebel movement, Mr Marcos said: "The war goes on in southeast Mexico and the Zapatistas are still armed and ready for combat."

Since their uprising in January 1994, the guerrillas have maintained a tense truce, despite the presence of tens of thousands of federal troops, but peace talks have been suspended for the past year.

The Zapatistas accuse the government of attempting to change the terms of the only agreement reached so far — on a new legal framework for indigenous rights.

President Ernesto Zedillo said last Saturday that the government could not give way on principles such as sovereignty and national unity; a coded rejection of the rebels' autonomy proposals. The official negotiator, Pedro Joaquin Coldwell, has held no meetings with rebel leaders.

The creation of the Zapatista Front is a response to the call by a majority of the guerrilla movement's civilian supporters for a peaceful solution to the conflict. Like the guerrilla army, it does not seek power and is independent of any political party. Unlike the rebels, its methods are non-military. It rejects the label of the rebels' "political front".

Washington Post, page 15



Hundreds of dignitaries from more than two dozen countries, among them Bernadette Chirac, wife of the French president (left) and the United States First Lady, Hillary Clinton (centre), paid their respects at the state funeral of Mother Teresa last Saturday in Calcutta. Later, they joined thousands of poor and crippled people at the Netaji Stadium in a papal mass for the 'Saint of the Gutters' PHOTO: SUNIL MALHOTRA

Biko's interrogators admit cover-up

David Beresford and Reuter

PRESIDENT Nelson Mandela unveiled a statue of Steve Biko last week, honouring the South African black liberation movement's best-known martyr on the 20th anniversary of his death in police custody.

The life-sized bronze figure stands in the centre of East London, a city on the Indian Ocean coast.

Mr Mandela called Biko "one of the greatest sons of our nation", and said his Black Consciousness movement revived the pulse of the black struggle when it had been made faint by "bannings, exiles, prison, murder and banishment".

Biko died on September 12, 1977, after being beaten by white security police officers who said they were trying to extract information about his activities.

The five policemen who interrogated Biko have applied to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for amnesty. As crowds outside the hearing demanded justice, Biko's chief interrogator, Harold Snyman, said: "We never intended to kill him. I just want to be forgiven for my past."

The success of the amnesty application depends on whether the commission is satisfied the policemen have made full disclosure and that their crime was politically motivated.

Mr Snyman admitted that there had been a cover-up of the true story. On instructions from the then regional security police chief, he had fabricated the date on which Biko suffered his injuries. The scuffle in which Biko was fatally injured had taken place a day earlier than claimed. Although badly hurt, he was kept standing for most of that day, handcuffed to a security gate.

Mr Snyman, who admitted that the use of torture was police policy at the time, said the interrogators had been trying to soften Biko up by depriving him of sleep. Naked and forced to stand, he had attacked his interrogators. Four policemen joined in the struggle. "I am not sure who hit him and who got hit," he said.

He claimed that one of the policemen stumbled, causing Biko to hit his head against a wall. "He fell to the ground. It was clear that the knock on his head had left him dazed and disorientated." They had immediately shackled him.

Lawyers for the Biko family accused Mr Snyman of offering only a modification of the original cover-up.

● Winnie Mandela is to run for deputy leader of the African National Congress — a position that would probably give her the deputy presidency of South Africa if she won.

The announcement comes after a week of fresh allegations that Mrs Mandela was involved in the murder of a teenager, Stompie Seipei, and a doctor, Abu-Baker Asvat. Her former husband, President Nelson Mandela, was last week accused of participating in the cover-up over the Stompie murder by requesting the imprisonment of a key witness.

Killers boost Moi's poll prospects

Chris McGreal in Mombasa

IF THE Kenyan government is to be believed, a group of marauding drug addicts and drunks has raided a police station, driven 100,000 people from their homes and throttled foreign tourism to Mombasa's pristine beaches.

Many of the victims of the recent violence here, along with President Daniel arap Moi's opponents and the clergy, see it differently. Amid growing suspicions that hit squads are being trained near Mombasa, they accuse the administration of precipitating chaos ahead of this year's presidential and parliamentary elections, with attacks reminiscent of the ethnic killings that claimed more than 1,000 lives across Kenya before the previous ballot five years ago.

The latest violence has centred on Likoni, a Mombasa district settled largely by people from other parts of the country. The bloodshed began with a raid on the local police station last month in which seven policemen were killed and 44 guns stolen. They are presumed to be the weapons used in a spate of killings that has claimed more than 50 lives in attacks on "up-country" Kenyans.

The raids have taken on religious and ethnic tones fuelled by resentment at the exploitation of local peoples by outsiders and international tourism. Most of Likoni's native residents are Digo and Muslim. Those from other parts are invariably Christian. "Up-country" Kenyans gave the opposition an electoral victory in the port city in 1992, and many believe they have been driven out for that reason.

Likoni's streets are almost deserted. All but a few businesses are closed. On the wall of a shop is the ominous graffiti: "Three days to go or you die." It is repeated several times along the main road. Tens of thousands of people have heeded the warning, packing the ferry to Mombasa town and buses to the interior.

More than 2,000 residents have sought shelter in Likoni's Roman Catholic church, including Emilia who lived in a room with her four children until the attacks started. Three weeks ago a gang of men came to the house waving guns, machetes, axes and sticks. "They started to beat me. We were crying, we were shouting. Nobody came to help," she said. The gang looted the house and left, but worse was to come.

"Men went to my brother's place around midnight. They took him to the lake. There were bodies there. They told my brother he was going to sleep with the dead. He dived into the lake and stayed there all night. When he escaped and went to the police, they told him they didn't have any radios and couldn't help."

He disappeared for days until he was found sleeping in a tree, afraid to come down. Emilia said he lost his mind and was sent home. "I'm ready to leave too. If I had the money I would go," she said.

After the raid on the police station, the government twice set deadlines for the surrender of the stolen weapons. While it failed to persuade the attackers to give up their guns, the deadlines sent a new wave of fear through Likoni, provoking another exodus of residents who feared the dreaded paramilitary General Service Unit would use the hunt for the weapons to launch a round of rapes and beatings.

There is growing evidence that the attackers are a trained militia. During their raids, some in the gangs have called themselves the Kaya Bombo, after a forest where local people say they have witnessed groups of young men being given weapons training. There are reports of similar activities around the Similani caves.

"I think it is political," said Mombasa's archbishop, John Njenga. "I am not saying the government is definitely involved, but I am not exonerating the government. The government has to provide security for the people."

The deputy provincial commissioner, Hassan Haj is dismissive. "These attackers are criminals. If it was political it would have targeted only one group. It is erroneous to say they've only targeted up-country people. Local people have died too," he said. "We don't know what triggered it; it's too premature to say."

Hundreds of people have been arrested for the attacks, including prominent local activists with Mr Moi's party. But it has done nothing to deter further killings.

Mr Moi must win at least 25 per cent of the vote in five provinces to avoid a run-off that would almost certainly cost him power. The coastal region will be crucial. The tens of thousands of voters forced out of Likoni have been effectively eradicated from the ballot, because they have left their registered constituency.

As the raids continue, even Likoni's Catholic church proved unsafe. Two weeks ago, about 25 gunmen attacked the refugees.

Charles Okelo was in the church grounds. "Some wore police hats and fatigue jackets," he said. "They walked along the street and everybody thought they were police until they got to the gate. Then they opened fire."

Two people were killed before the attackers were fought off by policemen guarding the church. But it does not make the refugees any less suspicious of the authorities. "The attackers were well organised because some went to burn bars, some came here and some went shooting about 200 metres from here," Mr Okelo said. "They split themselves into groups during their operations and nobody stopped them. Why?"

● Amnesty International last week urged its 1 million members worldwide to put pressure on their governments to force Kenya to end human rights abuse.

Beatings by police, torture, deaths in custody, an excessive use of lethal force and conditions in prison are worsening in the run-up to elections, according to a spokeswoman.

More than a dozen people were killed in July and August during protests demanding legal and constitutional reforms.

Mud smears America's Mr Clean

Martin Kettle in Washington

DON'T say it too loudly yet, but Al Gore's steady march towards the American presidency in the year 2000 is beginning to look just a little shaky.

Mr Gore is still the front-runner for the White House, if you can be a front-runner three years away from the end of the race. His campaign for the presidency began to roll on the day that he was elected vice-president. And so did the campaign against him.

He values his wholesome and clean-cut reputation, which is how most Americans think of him. Yet in hearings before the Senate governmental affairs committee over the past two weeks the outlines of a rather different Al Gore have been taking shape. And if this Al Gore becomes lodged in American minds then the presidential contest in 2000 could open up.

The committee began conducting its inquiry into campaign finance practices before the summer congressional recess. Most of its hearings are so detailed that they are followed and understood by only a small number of experts. But the committee's often nit-picking process has suddenly produced two damaging climactic moments since the hearings resumed this month. Both of them concern Mr Gore.

The first was a hearing on September 4 when three Buddhist nuns in cinnamon robes admitted destroying and altering evidence of illegal Democratic Party fund-raising after a visit by Mr Gore to their California temple during the 1996 campaign. Mr Gore has repeatedly denied that he was aware of the fund-raising dimensions of his visit to the temple, which as a tax-exempt religious foundation may not be used for political purposes.

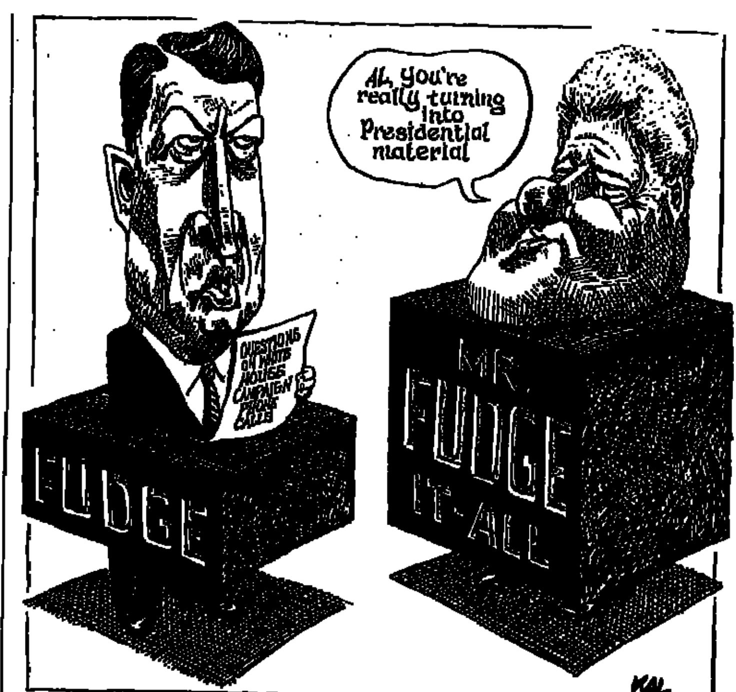
But the nuns' unconvincing testimony, and the fact that the visit was set up during a White House interview with Mr Gore arranged through the controversial Asian-American fund-raiser John Huang, have cast a shadow.

The second storm broke last week when the New York Times published a memo written by an aide for Mr Gore to use at a 1996 fund-raising strategy meeting in the White House. Mr Gore's office says he did not use the memo, which contains the sentence: "So we can raise the money, but only if the president and I actually do the events, the calls, the coffees, etc."

These words matter, because the vice-president has been trying to give the impression that he was very distant from the details of fund-raising during the 1996 campaign, and because there is an investigation into whether he made unlawful fund-raising phone calls from the White House at about this time. This month the attorney-general, Janet Reno, was compelled to order a 30-day inquiry into 46 such calls to establish whether a full-scale investigation should be mounted.

Gore supporters claim that this is nothing but an exercise in guilt by innuendo. Possibly so. But what matters is the impression these hearings are giving. Here the news for Mr Gore is not good.

In a poll taken by the Los Angeles Times last week, about half the public had "heard about" the allegations against Mr Gore. But then the pollsters asked the same voters whether Mr Gore "knowingly did anything unethical or illegal" at the temple or in making calls from the White House. Only one in four answered that Mr Gore had done nothing improper. The public may or may not know anything about the charges but they still think Mr Gore was up to something. Mr Clean has some scrubbing to do.



Yeltsin makes a spirited plea on vodka

Tom Whitehouse in Moscow

THE world's most famous vodka drinker last week urged his people to change their drinking habits. Moonshine vodka, President Boris Yeltsin said, was hurting the Russian liver and wallet.

"If people spend money on vodka, it should go to the treasury and not to swindlers," he argued. Eliminating sales of unlicensed vodka would also reduce the number of deaths from alcohol poisoning — which, he claimed, had risen threefold in the last five years.

Since Soviet-era controls on alcohol sales were relaxed five years ago, cheaper vodka — some of it available in cans and plastic cartons — has flooded the Russian market. According to the government only 20 per cent of alcoholic products sold in Russia are legal, the other 80 per cent representing what the president called Russia's "second most lucrative criminal business after illicit financial dealings".

Mr Yeltsin's comments were prompted by a crisis on Russia's border with Georgia, where 1,700 lorries carrying 20,000 tonnes of near pure alcohol, which is destined for bootleg distilleries in southern Russia, have been stuck for nearly a month.

After the head of the Russian border police threatened this month to use all necessary measures — including air power if necessary — to prevent the convoy entering Russia, the Georgian president, Eduard Shevardnaze, cancelled a trip to Moscow in protest.

The Russians say the raw alcohol, which comes mainly from Turkey and Greece, can only cross the border if the lorry drivers pay tax and duty on it.

The Georgians retort that Russia should solve its alcohol problems on its own territory, and complain that the blocking of the border is causing considerable economic damage in Georgia.

Other routes to Russia have been cut off by the war with the breakaway region of Abkhazia, which claims independence from Georgia. Georgian parliamentarians have denounced the Russian action and repeated demands for Russian soldiers patrolling Georgia's border with Turkey and its buffer zone with Abkhazia to leave.

Mr Yeltsin is not the first Russian leader to try to control alcohol. Former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev's popularity dived after he tried to limit vodka consumption, and Mr Yeltsin will be wise to avoid his predecessor's moral hectoring, particularly since he is known to enjoy Russia's national drink as much as anyone.

In recently published memoirs, Mr Yeltsin's former bodyguard tells how he regularly bought and doctored vodka for the president's binges. Following a multiple heart bypass operation last year, Mr Yeltsin is now reportedly keeping to a strict diet and is drinking much less.

Mr Yeltsin said the long-term solution to Russia's drink problem lies with an economic upturn. "If people have good jobs, high wages and look to the future with optimism there will be no reason to drink," the president said.

Looted artworks resurface following New York scam

Joanna Coles in New York

IN ONE of the most important art discoveries of the decade, a treasure trove of works by Rembrandt and Albrecht Dürer, assumed stolen and lost for ever, turned up in a Manhattan hotel room last week after a Japanese man offered to sell them to pay for a kidney transplant.

The stash includes Dürer's Woman Bathing, valued at $6 million, and Rembrandt's Standing Woman With Raised Hands, thought to be worth around $2 million. The 12 drawings were part of a collection looted by Soviet soldiers from the Bremen museum in Germany, in a series of big art thefts during the closing stages of the second world war. Several works from the Bremen collection turned up at the national museum in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Although art experts recorded seeing Rembrandts and Dürers in Baku and confirmed that at least eight drawings were among those stolen from Bremen, the works disappeared again in the mid-1990s, when the museum was suffering from chaotic management.

It took several days for museum officials to realise the works were missing; by the time they alerted police, the drawings were assumed to have left the country. Thought to have been stolen to order, for a private patron, it was presumed they would never surface in public again.

The extraordinary discovery, which has thrilled the art world, was made after a Japanese businessman, Masatsugu Koga, offered the works for sale claiming he needed to raise $12 million for a kidney transplant.

In April, Mr Koga approached officials at the German embassy in Tokyo, explaining that he needed surgery, which he hoped to have in the United States. He told them he had reluctantly decided to sell off some family treasures. He added that the art, including drawings and etchings by Jacob van Ruisdael, Annibale Carracci and Jan Victors, had been in his family for at least 10 years.

Initially, he was assumed to be a crank. It was only when he insisted on providing photographs of the works, which officials checked against records of the originals, that staff realised the magnitude of the find and decided to lure Mr Koga into an elaborate trap.

They feigned lack of interest until he dropped his asking price to $6 million. Then, in July, they invited him to Germany saying that before they handed over any money he must speak to experts to validate his claims. After refusing to show them an actual work, he told them that he had kept the entire collection in a safety deposit box in New York.

Last month, the trail moved to the US, where undercover customs agents, tipped off by the German officials and posing as art buyers, met Mr Koga in his hotel room. Shortly afterwards he was arrested and charged with possession of stolen works of art. He was released last week on bail of $250,000.

Sitting in a wheelchair throughout the court hearing, Mr Koga refused to enter a plea, saying only that he had been cruelly deceived by the German authorities and that his intention had been simply to return the drawings to their rightful owners. But according to court documents, Mr Koga admitted to at least one official that he realised the works were stolen.

New Big Five are set to redraw global trade map

Charlotte Denny

THE world economic map will be redrawn over the next two decades as developing countries become a dominant force in global trade while Europe's importance dwindles, a report published last week says.

The World Bank report says that the biggest five developing nations' share of world trade, currently barely a third of the European Union's, will surge to 50 per cent more than Europe's by 2020.

"The next 25 years will see an unprecedented boost in the prominence of developing countries in the world economy," says the report. "Five of these countries are projected to fundamentally change the way the world does business."

The Big Five, as the report dubs them, are Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and Russia. Between them they hold half the world's workforce, but currently account for less than a 10th of world output and trade.

The Bank admits there will be costs for the countries concerned and for the rest of the world in adjusting to the scale of change to global economic relations. But Joseph Stiglitz, the Bank's chief economist, said there was no evidence to support the charge that increased competition from developing countries would pull down wages for unskilled workers in the West. The report predicts that the emergence of the Big Five will have a beneficial effect on real wages for both skilled and unskilled workers in most countries.

The Bank says the economic performance of developing countries last year was the best for a decade, with growth rates averaging 5.5 per cent.

Share of world exports

1992: 9.0% · 14.5% · 76.5% High income countries

2020: 26.4% · 22.0% · 51.6% High income countries

Paris acts over forced sterilisations

Paul Webster in Paris

THE French government has launched an urgent inquiry after a report revealed that about 15,000 women in psychiatric institutions have been sterilised without their permission.

The figures were revealed by Nicole Diederich, of the national health and research institute, Inserm, and prompted warnings that a *de facto* eugenics policy could be developing.

Her research was published in the satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo, which claimed that some hospitals were encouraging the practice and carrying out operations in secret.

The health minister, Bernard Kouchner, and the employment minister, Martine Aubry, who is responsible for welfare issues, said that the government's social affairs inspectorate had been ordered to investigate. A national ethics committee will be asked to make recommendations on reinforcing civil rights for the mentally handicapped.

Ms Diederich made her estimate after studying cases in the Bordeaux region. Of the 260 women held in psychiatric hospitals in the Gironde *département*, a third had been sterilised without their permission. Marc Maury, chairman of an ethical committee dealing with handicapped people, said that further research had confirmed her figures, although thousands more cases may not have been recorded.

Most operations followed requests from families and decisions made by doctors without consulting the patient, he said. The operations were often carried out during routine appendix surgery. The patients had no idea they had been sterilised.

Several appeals have been made in recent years for clear guidance from the national ethics committee, which includes doctors, psychiatrists, philosophers and social workers. Its last recommendation on the sterilisation of mentally handicapped women, last year, did not advocate a ban but called on surgeons to carry out the operation only in extreme circumstances.

The committee will have to review its 1996 ruling in the light of the new findings. No estimate had previously been made of the number of operations and it does not appear to have been aware of the extent of the problem.

Jean-Pierre Changeux, chairman of the national association for paralysed people, said he feared that a lack of clear guidance had opened the way to an ethical dilemma. "Every time more latitude is given, we take another step towards de facto eugenics," he said. "Recent history has shown how watchful we have to be."

Health ministry officials confirmed that there were no hard and fast rules on what constituted a severe mental handicap. Relatives sometimes interpreted it as failure to cope with school programmes, or anti-social behaviour.

Under the present law, families take a lead in committing a person to a mental institution and can ask surgeons to carry out sterilisation without seeking independent advice.

"There is pressure for a vast national debate on the whole subject of sterilisation, including voluntary sterilisation of women with no handicaps," a health official said. "The law still forbids this operation when it is as an alternative form of voluntary contraception rather than a medical question."

Japan police get tough on gangsters

Jonathan Watts in Tokyo

TOKYO police staged a huge crackdown on organised crime last week to try to prevent a simmering dispute in Japan's largest yakuza gangland group from turning into all-out war.

About 700 police, many in riot gear, raided 91 gangster-owned buildings in connection with a series of shootings during the previous week. Eight mobsters were arrested on charges ranging from possession of illegal weapons to assault.

Osaka police also raided more than 80 locations, including the Kobe headquarters of the yamaguchi-gumi, the country's biggest crime syndicate with an estimated 34,000 affiliated members.

Nationwide, more than 2,000 police have been mobilised to combat an outbreak of yakuza violence that has so far resulted in two deaths, two injuries and at least 12 gun attacks on gang-owned buildings.

The latest conflict was triggered by the killing of the yamaguchi-gumi's second-in-command, Masaru Takumi, who was shot at a hotel in Kobe last month. The mobster who is thought to have ordered the hit, Taro Nakano, was expelled from the syndicate three days later. Most of the gun attacks have been on buildings owned by the Nakano gang, or affiliated groups, in what police believe to be warnings of retaliation.

According to the Mainichi Shimbun newspaper, Takumi gang leaders have said they will not launch a full offensive until the period of mourning for their leader has passed. It is not known how long that will be.

The fear among many Japanese is that discipline in the yamaguchi-gumi has broken down and that more bystanders will be hurt or killed if violence escalates further. The conflict has already claimed one innocent victim — a 69-year-old dentist was hit in the head by a stray bullet and died in hospital.

Public concern has manifested itself in rallies calling for tougher measures against organised crime.

Le Monde, page 13

The Week in Britain James Lewis

Blair and Ashdown seek out common ground

THIS WEEK saw the historic first meeting of the Lib-Lab Cabinet committee set up by the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, to discuss how to advance the "shared constitutional agenda" of the two parties. Grassroots Liberal Democrats, who are always nervous about cosying up to either of the two big parties, were further alarmed when their leader, Paddy Ashdown, admitted publicly for the first time that a coalition with Labour was "a possibility".

With a bomb-proof Commons majority of 178, Labour has no need of Liberal support. But Mr Blair is looking further ahead than that, possibly to a realignment of British politics in which, under a system of proportional representation (PR), Labour and Lib Dems could virtually destroy the Tories' chances of returning to power.

Mr Ashdown will need to persuade his wary activists at the party's conference at Eastbourne next week that they are not being taken for a ride. So he will press the Lib-Lab committee for the creation of an electoral reform commission, charged with finding a PR alternative to the first-past-the-post system of voting in Westminster elections.

Mr Blair has always said that he is unconvinced by the case for PR at Westminster, but he has pledged a referendum on the subject, possibly in time for the next general election in 2001. He has also promised PR for the Euro-elections in 1999.

The new committee will, of course, discuss other issues on which the two parties broadly agree, such as Labour's plans for regional government in London, and the incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights into British law. But, for the Lib Dems, the biggest prize would be faster progress towards PR, and an electoral commission up and running before Parliament resumes on 27 October.

Mr Ashdown believes the Mr Blair can be persuaded to support PR. "He knows perfectly well that the vast majority of modernisers in the Parliamentary Labour party are in favour," he said. "He won't want to be on the opposite side of the argument from them."

A WOMAN made legal history by successfully suing her ex-husband for damages after he raped her. The woman, aged 40, was awarded £14,000 in what experts described as a ground-breaking case.

Husbands have been successfully criminally prosecuted for raping their wives, but this was the first successful civil action. The victim brought it after the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) declined to prosecute, even though the husband had admitted rape. The CPS had said the husband was unlikely to re-offend, so "it would not be in the public interest" to proceed.

MORE THAN one adult in five in Britain — 8.4 million people — is a poor reader, according to a survey by the Office for National Statistics, which suggested that standards of literacy were lower than was previously believed.

About 22 per cent of Britons aged 16-65 performed at the bottom level of an international test of ability to comprehend written information. Of the eight countries surveyed — Britain, Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States and Canada — only Poland had more adults at the lowest level of literacy.

The Government is already acting on a literacy strategy with the modest aim of ensuring that 80 per cent of youngsters have a reading age of 11 when they leave primary school. An army of 200 "literacy consultants" is being recruited to help schools, each of which will be required to nominate one teacher as a "literacy adviser".

THE PUBLISHER of a "vile and evil" neo-Nazi magazine, which sparked race-hate campaigns against the Liberal Democrat leader, Paddy Ashdown, and against the mother of the former boxing champion, Frank Bruno, was jailed for 21 months for publishing material likely to stir up racial hatred.

Mark Atkinson, aged 31, a leading member of the far right Combat 18 group, admitted publishing Stormer, a magazine which gave instructions on how to make car bombs and which targeted synagogues and individuals, including the footballer, Paul Ince, the newsreader, Anna Ford, and the actress, Vanessa Redgrave.

Judge George Bathurst Norman said that, in all his 37 years at the Bar, he had "never encountered such vile outpourings of hatred and incitement to violence as revealed in these magazines".

ANGELA EAGLE, a junior environment minister, appealed for her privacy to be respected as lesbian campaigners celebrated her arrival as the first "out" woman MP in a generation.

She was applauded by OutRage!, the homosexual rights group, which claims that about 60 MPs are lesbian, gay or bisexual, and that some hold senior positions in the three main parties. "There is no reason why they should remain secretive about their sexuality," it said. "That only fuels the idea that there is something shameful about being gay."

The last MP to acknowledge being a lesbian was the left-wing Maureen Colquhoun, who lost her seat in 1979 and who was "outed" in a far more restrictive social climate.

Austin

BLAIR WAS THE ONE WHO TALKED RELIGION, CAREY TALKED POLITICS.

TUC CONFERENCE

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
September 21 1997

Talks start without Unionists

John Mullin

THE HISTORIC "all-party" negotiations on the future of Northern Ireland got off to a spluttering start on Monday in the absence of five Unionist and loyalist parties. But the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mo Mowlam, was confident that the Ulster Unionists, the largest party in Northern Ireland, would soon join the talks.

The first day of the talks saw frantic shuttle diplomacy from Paul Murphy, the minister for political development, and George Mitchell, the former United States senator who is chairing the process.

Both men visited the Ulster Unionist party (UUP) leader, David Trimble, at his Belfast headquarters in an effort to secure participation. The UUP was asked to endorse a fudge over the issue of decommissioning of weapons to allow the political negotiations to begin.

The UUP was holding out for changes to the wording of that formula, but signalled it was ready to join the talks. Only the Democratic Unionist party and the UK Unionists are expected to stay away completely.

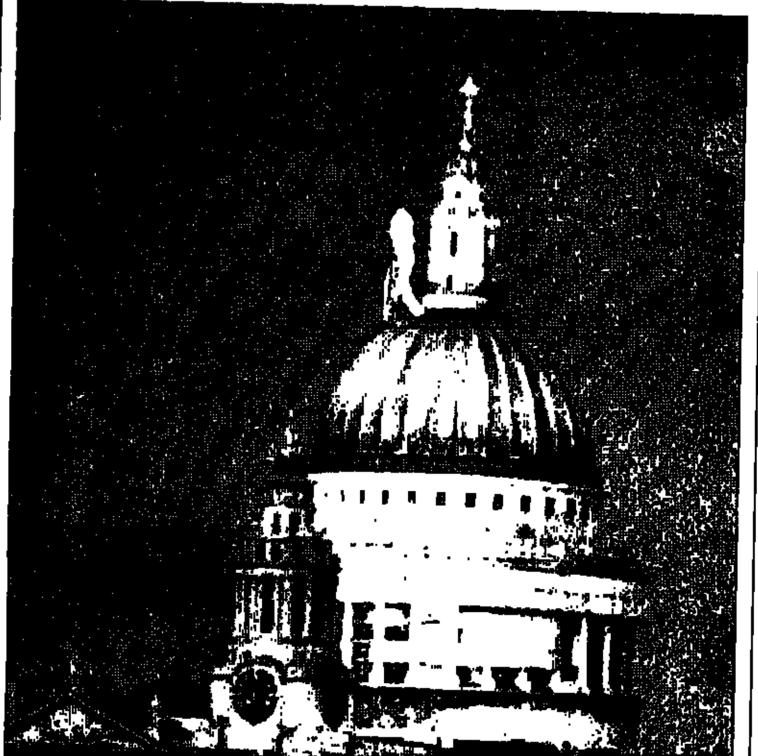
As she emerged after seven hours of talks, Dr Mowlam said: "Today marks a significant stage in the talks process. It is the start of the process of substantive negotiations.

"I think the Ulster Unionists will eventually come into the process. I sincerely hope they will. It's what the people of Northern Ireland want: it's the only way forward."

Mr Trimble's party is likely to enter proximity talks — negotiations in separate rooms — and may join face-to-face negotiations with Sinn Fein next month.

Sinn Fein, which attended the talks along with the SDLP, the Alliance, the Women's Coalition and the Labour Group, was asked to explain remarks by an IRA spokesperson that the IRA had "problems" with the Mitchell principles of democracy and non-violence. All participants must adhere to the six principles governing the negotiations process.

Dr Mowlam said she was satisfied with Sinn Fein's "full and comprehensive assurances".



High way . . . acrobat Didier Pasquette strolls along a wire 50 metres above the Thames river in London in a record-breaking walk to launch the Thames Festival. His partner, Jade Kindar-Martin, climbed over him as they met from opposite ends PHOTO: MARTIN GODWIN

TUC 'must modernise'

Guardian Reporters

TONY BLAIR last week became the first prime minister to make a speech to the Trades Union Congress conference for 20 years, but delegates preferred the more sympathetic words of the Archbishop of Canterbury. George Carey's address — the first to the TUC by a leader of the Church of England — inspired a standing ovation.

Mr Blair offered trade unions the chance to play a full part in the building of a new Britain, but only if they follow New Labour's example by modernising themselves and throwing off the dogmas of the past.

He emphasised the common values of justice, fairness and community shared by Labour and the unions. But he brushed aside union pressure for the Government to go beyond its current modest pledges on employment rights and warned that he had no intention of abandoning the "flexibility of the present labour market".

Adopting a tone described by one union leader as hectoring, Mr Blair told the TUC: "Modernise your political structures as we have done in the Labour party."

The unions' role, he said, was to work in partnership with employers and business to win the "crusade for competitiveness".

"We will not go back to the days of industrial warfare, strikes without ballots, mass and flying pickets, secondary action and all the rest of it," he said.

Most senior union leaders put a brave face on the speech in public, though in private several reacted with dismay. The response from the delegates themselves was noticeably cooler than that given to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who aligned the Christian churches' vision of "the Kingdom of God" with the values of trade unionism. Mr Carey also explicitly endorsed calls for a statutory right to union recognition, insisting employers had a moral responsibility to recognise the representatives of their employees and take part in union action. "That was the most leftwing speech we'll see all week," said one delegate.

The director general of the CBI, Adair Turner, also made a landmark speech, only the second ever to the TUC by a CBI leader. Mr Turner hailed the two bodies' substantial areas of common ground, and "escape from the ideological divides" of the past.

Brown speeds debt relief

THE Chancellor, Gordon Brown, was expected to spearhead a global initiative this week to cancel the debt of the majority of the world's poorest countries by the year 2000, *writes Alex Brummer.*

In a major speech on development issues to be delivered on Tuesday to the Commonwealth finance meeting in Mauritius, Mr Brown was expected to set a series of bold targets for speeding up the process of relieving poor countries of an estimated $5.6 billion of Western debt.

Mr Brown shares the growing view among development activists that the world's financial leaders need to inject new urgency into the process of easing debt burdens if it is not to seize up because of indifference and shortage of funding.

He will propose that by 2000, 75 per cent of the world's poorest countries should have schemes designed to cancel or relieve their debt. This will free domestic resources to invest in education, health and the relief of poverty.

Mr Brown is seeking support for a number of proposals:

❑ Poor countries with reform programmes in place, including a degree of transparency in their financial affairs and plans to expand production, should receive urgent relief.

❑ All creditor countries should cancel repayment of existing aid loans.

❑ The official creditors' club should be more flexible and go beyond the 80 per cent debt forgiveness proposed for countries such as Mozambique.

❑ The World Bank should review the debt of the poorest countries to determine any gaps in debt relief not covered by existing plans.

❑ Pressure should be kept high for debt relief for countries whose public spending is directed at production, rather than military or unnecessary prestige projects.

❑ Britain will provide technical assistance to countries reshaping their public finances and will urge other nations to do the same.

● Britain last week urged the Commonwealth to adopt limited sanctions against Nigeria but is refusing to demand its expulsion for human rights abuses and failing to move towards democracy.

Comment, page 12

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Diana's death prompts picture ban by media

Stuart Millar

THE backlash against the paparazzi following the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, continued last weekend when Sunday tabloid newspapers promised they would no longer publish intrusive pictures, in an attempt to distance themselves from the outcry following allegations that photographers had chased the princess's car on the night of the fatal crash.

The move, led by a thundering editorial in the News of the World and echoed in the Sunday Mirror and the People, brings the papers into line with their daily counterparts, which last week announced similar bans in response a biting attack on the press by Earl Spencer, the Princess's brother, during Diana's funeral.

The News of the World said the circumstances of Diana's death "highlighted the conduct of roving bands of thugs with cameras who operate on the underbelly of the newspaper world".

Michael Fabricant, MP for Lichfield and a member of the Commons' culture, media and sport select committee, welcomed the move. "The public mood is now ready for curbs on the press, so the newspapers have to show they can deliver a workable and sustainable restraint that will not merely last for the short period of grief over Diana, but for the years to come as well," he said.

Lord Wakeham, chairman of the Press Complaints Commission, the industry's self-regulatory body, has already consulted editors about the tragedy.

He is expected to issue a new code of practice shortly after the PCC meets next week. The new guidelines are likely to include a specific ban on the publication of unauthorised photographs of both Prince William and Prince Harry until they leave university, extending the current policy that protects the two boys until they reach the age of 16.

The News of the World said it would follow the present code, which forbids long-range shots of people on private property and the "merciless stalking and pursuing" of people in the news. "Every other newspaper should have the courage to do the same instead of fighting squalidly among themselves as they scramble for the moral high ground," it said. The paper will now demand that photographers and picture agencies around the world follow the rules or face a ban on their photographs.

The Sunday Mirror also said it would respect the privacy of the princes.

Ed Vulliamy in Washington adds: A long-awaited and feared book on the British royal family by the American popular biographer, Kitty Kelley, was published in New York this week. It contains a string of extraordinary allegations about the Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh, the Queen Mother and others — as well as some illuminating insight into the royals' lives and history.

The book, titled The Royals, cannot and will not be published in Britain, both for legal reasons and reasons of taste and decorum — especially during a time of public grief following the death of Diana.

The book alleges serial marital infidelity by members of the royal family, of all generations.

One living member of the royal family is accused of vitriolic racialism and anti-Semitism, and doubts are cast on the lineage of the Queen.

Al Fayeds agree driver was drunk

Alison Daniels

MORE THAN two weeks after the Paris crash, lawyers representing the Al Fayed family have conceded that Henri Paul, deputy head of security at the Ritz hotel in Paris, should never have been allowed to drive the car carrying the Princess of Wales and Dodi Al Fayed.

Responding to a statement from the Paris prosecutor's office which confirmed that Paul's blood contained three times the French legal alcohol limit and traces of anti-depressant, a spokesman for Mohamed Al Fayed said that if they had known of Paul's drink problem he would have been sacked.

"We condemn in the strongest possible terms anybody who would drink and drive or take this cocktail of drugs," said Mr Al Fayed's press spokesman, Michael Cole.

Bernard Dartevelle, a lawyer representing Mr Al Fayed, added: "Obviously Paul should not have been at the wheel. But he was the only one to be aware of his real condition."

It represents a clear shift in the position of the Al Fayed camp, who have heaped blame for the fatal crash squarely on the paparazzi. They had countered each fresh revelation with denials and sought to deflect any hint of criticism from the Ritz, and ultimately Mr Al Fayed.

In his briefings to reporters on the same day as the crash, Mr Cole described the paparazzi as creeps and loathsome, macho money grabbers: "It is the paparazzi who have killed them by chasing them."

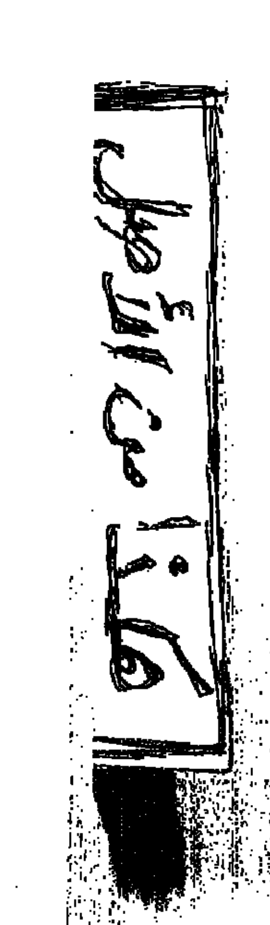
Mr Cole said Paul was a conscientious employee who was regularly used as a chaffeur, was an advanced driver and was trained in anti-terrorist techniques.

Rumours that Paul was drunk were denied.

But the Al Fayeds were soon bombarded by allegations about Paul's credentials. A colleague claimed Paul did not have a licence from the ministry of police to drive the car and had not undergone medical checks required to drive a high-powered limousine. And three separate blood tests all concluded Paul was drunk.

● Elton John's tribute, to Diana, "Candle in the Wind", rocketed straight to No 1 last Sunday, having gone platinum in a day and becoming the fastest-selling single of all time.





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In Brief

UP TO two-thirds of the sex offenders required to sign up for the paedophile registration scheme launched last month have failed to report to police.

CENTRICA, the supply arm of the former British Gas, announced a series of new tariffs that mean price cuts for all except around a million of its poorest customers. Those using pre-payment meters will see no change to the cost of gas.

THE Conservative leader, William Hague, said that unless he got sweeping reforms of the party's organisation he would resign. Earlier, he enraged Downing Street, Buckingham Palace and even many Tories after accusing the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, of hijacking arrangements for the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales, for his own political ends.

THE Security Service (MI5) keeps a "pink list" of gays regarded as potential security risks or possible informants, according to a former naval officer.

THE perimeter fence around the former United States air base at Greenham Common was finally removed in a ceremony that made no mention of the women who camped outside it for 18 years in protest at the nuclear arsenal once housed within.

HUGH DYKES, a pro-European Conservative, announced his defection to the Liberal Democrats. He was MP for Harrow East until losing his seat in the general election.

THE British Airways cabin crew dispute, which cost the company at least £125 million, has been settled, with both the company and the Transport and General Workers' Union hailing the start of a new relationship.

UNIVERSITIES are on the brink of bursting the Government's cap on undergraduate numbers after embarking on a recruitment binge to sign up students before the imposition of tuition fees next year.

DAVID BRANDT, the chief minister of Montserrat, was welcomed to London by the Prime Minister, Tony Blair. Mr Blair promised a new airstrip for the stricken island and loans to help islanders buy their own homes.

MORE than £65 million of taxpayers' money earmarked for humanitarian aid in India was instead spent on helicopters that are now to be returned to Britain and sold for scrap.

BOB PHILLIS, the deputy director general of the BBC, has been appointed chief executive of the Guardian Media Group.

SNP hails statute for liberty

Ewen MacAskill on the possible implications of last week's historic vote

THERE were many smiles in the ornate City Chambers off Edinburgh's Royal Mile when the result of the Scottish referendum was announced formally on Friday last week. But none was broader than that of Alex Salmond, leader of the Scottish National Party.

An hour later, across the road, beside the building that housed the Scottish parliament 300 years ago, the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, told Labour supporters waving Saltires that devolution would strengthen the Union, not lead to separation. But if his assessment was accurate, why was Mr Salmond, the standard-bearer of independence, so happy?

The SNP leader gleefully predicted to journalists that the creation of a Scottish Parliament in 2000 will lead to independence in his lifetime. He could be right. Labour may have made a fundamental mistake by playing on Scottish patriotism, as it has done unashamedly throughout the six-week campaign. The Scottish lion has been let out and Labour might not find it that easy to prod him into a cage again.

What timescale does the SNP have in mind for independence? One SNP strategist pointed out one anniversary to aim for — 2007, 300 years after Scotland lost its independence in the Union with England.

That might seem optimistic, but it is not impossible. A Labour government at Westminster and a Labour-dominated one in Edinburgh could quickly find themselves wrangling over finance. And relations could become much worse if there were a hostile Tory government at Westminster, at odds with a Labour government in Edinburgh. Labour is expected to win the next general election, but the Conservatives might make a comeback by, say, 2007. What chance the Union then?

The 129-member Scottish Parliament, which is to begin work in January 2000, will be elected partly by proportional representation (PR), which promises to give the SNP a sizeable bloc. At present, the party has only six MPs out of the 72 from Scotland at Westminster, in spite of achieving 22 per cent of the Scottish vote at the general election. And the SNP could be boosted further by the timing of the Scottish election, in 1999, mid-term for the current Labour government, which is a traditional period of unpopularity for any government.



Tony Blair greets Labour supporters celebrating the devolution vote in Edinburgh last week PHOTOGRAPH: MURDO MacLEOD

The easy alliance between the SNP and Labour cannot continue. The Paisley by-election, following the suicide of Gordon McMaster and allegations of sleaze, will be held before the end of the year and one SNP source said: "We will go in hard. We have to." And there are Labour MPs, the vast bulk of those in Scotland, who have no stomach for co-operation with the nationalists. Some confide, in private, that they fear devolution will lead to independence.

But the Government line, that the Scots do not want independence, is borne out by countless polls.

What primarily concerns people is health, education and issues that directly affect them, and the Scottish parliament will have the power to deal with these. As for foreign affairs, defence and other areas retained by Westminster, it is difficult to see the Scottish public becoming worked up enough to start demanding they be transferred to Edinburgh.

Mr Blair and Mr Dewar may yet be proved right. It could be that the sole *raison d'être* of the SNP was as a protest group, to keep up pressure for devolution, and now that has been achieved it will begin to fade.

But there is a problem with that scenario: almost everyone at the referendum count in Edinburgh was surprised at the scale of the Yes, Yes vote.

Devolution was dismissed by opponents as an issue of the chattering classes. The voters proved otherwise, confirming the sense of Scottish identity that has grown over the last two decades. A Scottish parliament can only act as a focus for that identity and strengthen it.

Scottish politics and British politics have been transformed. What is left is a straight fight in Scotland between devolution and independence. Mr Salmond had good cause to smile.

Labour turns up pressure in Welsh vote

Michael White

THE Labour leadership was this week pushing hard to clinch a 1997 election hat trick with a Yes vote in Thursday's referendum for Welsh devolution.

Amidst deep fears over the north-south divide within the principality and doubts about the limited Welsh assembly package, which does not include tax-raising powers, senior ministers insisted that the plans were tailor-made for Wales. "I am not asking for a copycat vote," said the Scottish Secretary, Donald Dewar, who flew to Cardiff to join forces with his Welsh counterpart, Ron Davies, after completing a successful devolution campaign in Scotland.

Mr Davies rejected fears of a north-south divide. "We have built into the assembly proposals a number of specific proposals to allow a distinctive voice for North Wales. At the moment all power is in Cardiff without a democratic voice," he said, referring to the powers held by successive secretaries of state in Wales. "In future power will still be in Cardiff but the people of North Wales will have a distinctive voice" in a democratically-elected assembly.

There would be a statutory committee representing North Wales's interests in the 60-member assembly, and 20 of those members would be elected by proportional representation expressly designed to ease fears of one-party domination or domination by South Wales.

Pro-devolution campaigners fear a cripplingly low turnout, and big guns such as Tony Blair are visiting to whip up interest.

The Just Say No campaign complains of intimidation of Labour dissidents — including reported threats to de-select its five dissenting MPs — and of dirty tricks against them.

They point to the cost — £100 million over four years — of running an assembly, and predict that the unaccountable "quango state" in Wales will not be dismantled.

Lurking beneath their campaign is a fear that an assembly even without the legislative or tax raising powers granted to Scotland will be a stepping stone to separatism.

Ministers face public sector pay row

Ewen MacAskill and John Carvel

MINISTERS are bracing themselves for an embarrassing row with public sector workers as the Treasury prepares to issue guidance to the pay review boards this week that there should be no relaxation of the tight public spending controls inherited from the previous Conservative government.

Stephen Byers, the school standards minister, underlined the Government's tough attitude when he dismissed head teachers' claims for an inflation-busting 10 per cent rise. The money should be spent instead on books, equipment and more teachers, he said. He softened this by saying there could be higher pay to encourage the most skilled teachers to stay.

Head teachers last week submitted the 10 per cent pay claim they said was required to stave off a recruitment crisis, and health unions are also demanding big rises. Doctors and nurses were expected to submit their claims to the salaries review body this week.

The Treasury, also putting forward its submission this week, is determined to stick to public spending ceilings inherited from the Tories.

"It is not our intention to have a row," said Mr Byers. "We will be firm but fair. The public sector unions will understand that. We want more money going into schools and hospitals rather than pay."

A Treasury source said: "We will take a tough line. That is what is necessary to put public finances in order if we are going to make the improvements we all want. The first two years will be hard but we cannot make the mistake of the Labour government in 1974 which lost control of public sector pay in the first two years and lost the general election."

Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Union of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers, warned: "Sooner or later there's bound to be an explosion of anger among teachers. Industrial action can't be ruled out if teachers are going to be pushed down year after year".

Christine Hancock, general secretary of the biggest nursing union, the Royal College of Nursing, noted that cabinet ministers were in line for 20 per cent pay rises. "It seems to me incredibly insensitive that the people at the top of the decision-making process are taking such enormous pay rises while asking nurses and others in the public sector to accept virtually nothing," she said.

"We want decent rises for our members because there is evidence of a shortage of nurses . . . There is not a shortage of people wanting to be cabinet ministers."

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A victory for all of us

RARELY can a nation's will have been more settled. With two thumping majorities, which surpassed the hopes of even the most optimistic campaigners, the Scots showed they are the people who like to say yes. They wanted a parliament, they wanted it to pay its way, and now they have granted their own wish. A sense of pride has been stirred, captured by the Scotsman newspaper's triumphant headline: "A nation again." But there is much to celebrate across the union — not all of it obvious.

For one thing, a political truism has been broken. The 63.5 per cent of Scots who voted for their new parliament to have tax-varying powers defied the rule which states no electorate will ever freely choose to shell out more of its hard-won earnings to the public coffers. Their decision suggests that when voters can picture their money being spent closer to home, by people they choose, they can think the unthinkable — even voting for what might be higher taxes.

The more direct consequence of the double Yes vote is a surge in momentum for the Government's most radical idea: the spreading out of power. As Tony Blair said on his victory tour last week, "the era of big centralised government" is over. The torch now passes to Wales, which this week will have the chance to get a more democratic grip on the way it is governed. The Yes campaign there has argued that Wales must not get left behind, becoming the only part of the UK still ruled by London diktat. After the Scottish result, that argument has even greater force.

Still, there is cause for caution. The sheer scale of the Yes majorities — with 80 per cent in some districts — has led to quiet fears that a tide of nationalistic feeling has been unleashed that mere devolution alone cannot satisfy. This leaves Labour with a challenge. They have to prove that their campaign rhetoric about strengthening the union was sincere. In short, they must make devolution work. Otherwise Scottish Nationalist Party — and Conservative — warnings of "instability," with endless London-Edinburgh rows about budgets and jurisdiction, will be vindicated and the demand for full-blown separation enhanced.

Labour has to be mindful, too, of the sensitivities of English public opinion. A Scottish parliament will clear the air for touchy questions that were buried during the decades of central control. Many English voters will raise not just the West Lothian question — why should Scots have a say over us when we cannot have a say over them — but also prickly matters of subsidies and handouts. Whatever the real numbers, plenty of English men and women imagine they pay Scotland's bills. They will be less willing to do that now. That might translate into a demand for more decentralisation in England: perhaps regional assemblies or an English parliament. But it could also inflame a more brutal English nationalism.

One immediate way to aid the new venture would be the investment of some heavyweight political personnel. For all his vows of modesty, the Scottish Secretary, Donald Dewar, should consider offering his services as Scotland's first First Minister. He would be the candidate of trust and stability. The Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, should also ponder an Edinburgh turn. It would not cut off his Downing Street ambitions but, in an era of decentralised politics, might even count as a plus. For now we should savour the fact that what the previous Labour leader, John Smith, called Labour's "unfinished business" has been completed at last. Let's make it worth the wait.

A subtle Chinese party surprise

SO THE Chinese Communist party congress is not just about economics after all. There was a familiar sound last weekend when foreign diplomats in Beijing settled down to applaud the new "pragmatism" of President Jiang Zemin as he announced his intention to sell off state enterprises. The rather opaque passage in Mr Jiang's speech on "socialist democracy" seemed of little interest. But developments on Monday offered a more nuanced perspective. Somehow the alleged text of a letter by the former party chief, Zhao Ziyang, calling for a re-assessment of the Tiananmen Square massacre in Beijing has filtered into the foreign media. And in Hong Kong it was reported that democracy of a sort may be about to strike at the very heart of the party. According to the report, there will be competitive elections for the ruling Politburo and Standing Committees, with the 300-odd strong Central Committee as the electoral constituency.

This is all a long way from Western-style democracy, which the Chinese leaders explicitly reject — as they must do if they are to hang on to power. But they must also realise that the party will not survive for ever unless it can edge forward with some measures of political reform: no doubt this also serves a factional purpose in manoeuvring against the old guard ultra-left. Twenty years ago, Deng Xiaoping encouraged the birth of Beijing's Democracy Wall to ease out Mao Zedong's immediate successor, Hua Guofeng. But Deng turned on the protesters as soon as they had fulfilled his purpose. That route is now closed off for obvious security reasons. There is no way to prove that the letter is genuine. But allowing Mr Zhao, who was ousted eight years ago for having taken a sympathetic view of the students, to revive the issue would serve a similar purpose to that of Deng, even if the initiative is quickly knocked down or denied.

Chinese political progress is based on such crab-like moves. The much-heralded privatisation of state industry will no doubt prove much less sweeping than initial reports suggested — as the vice-prime minister, Zhu Rongji, who will be in charge of the sell-off, took pains to explain on Monday. That is just as well. Those Western diplomats in Beijing who were said last Saturday to be "excited" by the prospect of "one of the biggest garage sales of state firms the world has ever seen" are either very stupid or indifferent to the wellbeing of millions of Chinese workers. Such garage sales have proved disastrous in the former Soviet bloc. Reform of China's huge state sector is essential but must be managed with extreme care. Nor will it make for accurate understanding to view China through our own ideological blinkers. This is uncharted territory, where the old labels do not apply.

Aid, arms and the new mood

THE British Chancellor's initiative to tackle the plight of the world's poorest countries chimes appropriately with the current talk of national compassion. Gordon Brown this week urged the Commonwealth Finance meeting to lighten developing countries' burden of more than five and a half billion dollars of debt. He hopes to take his proposals on to Hong Kong for the International Monetary Fund and the Group of Seven to approve. An important feature of the scheme is to discriminate against countries which spend extravagantly upon prestige projects, are seriously corrupt, or make massive arms purchases.

This call for "transparency and openness" in the giving and receiving of aid has a downside for the developing countries if it becomes merely a one-way mechanism by which the developed countries can deliver harsh judgment. If it is to work, then it has to go both ways. Western governments must hand out censure, and deny export guarantees, to companies from their own countries which act irresponsibly, or encourage corrupt practices, in the developing world. And they must judge themselves far more critically than they currently do when it comes to the arms trade.

Other famous figures have already taken up the broader theme of arms sales. In May eight Nobel Peace Prize winners, including the Dalai Lama and Mikhail Gorbachev, issued a draft international code of conduct for arms transfers which is much tighter than the current feeble arrangement for a voluntary register of conventional weapons exports. Yet the US, which ended its arms sales ban to Latin America earlier this year, remains top of the league, followed by Britain with Russia close behind.

In any given case, the excuse is always that the weapon transfer in question is needed to maintain the balance. "There is no arms race in southeast Asia," a senior US defence official said last month. "It's simply a matter of appropriate modernisation." If we are serious about new ideals for a new millennium, such nonsense should no longer be tolerated. The aim should be to maintain arms balances at minimum levels and to curb, not encourage, competitive modernisation — for all countries, not just the poorest who depend on foreign aid and can be ticked off for yielding to temptation. If it is wrong to buy, how can it be right to sell?

Beyond Africa's continental drift

David Pallister believes that despite the turmoil that has characterised independent Africa, a new generation offers hope

IT IS 20 years since I first smelt the musty perfume of Africa's red soil; 15 since I saw the late Fela Kuti and his band blast in the dawn at The Shrine in Lagos; 10 since I marvelled at the Ethiopian wilderness and felt the hot rock two miles deep in a South African gold mine. It is just as easy to be enthralled by Africa as to despair at it.

Like India, it has an anniversary this year. Like India, it happened on the stroke of midnight, when Kwame Nkrumah raised the red, gold and green tricolour above the assembly house in Accra. The independent state of Ghana was born 40 years ago, the first of the colonial territories to gain independence and reverse the scramble for Africa that had arbitrarily carved up the continent 60 years before. It was a time of great expectations. Some say the child peaked at birth.

Is there now cause for celebration, when the "basket-case" clichés are once more being wheeled out in the face of the turmoil and sufferings of the past few years? Well, if there are no optimists, no allies, no contemplation, there will be no progress. So in October a group of eminent Africans are meeting in London, right after the Commonwealth conference in Edinburgh, to review the situation and, unashamedly, to accentuate the positive.

It's going to be tough; the opening address will be from Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, who has enjoyed 17 years of almost unfettered power in what some critics call a de facto one-party state. But then, didn't this spring partly from the flawed agreement that turned him from guerrilla leader to statesman? Though he has resisted the tide of pluralism, latterly the old warrior has been a dedicated peacemaker in a region at war.

A library of disputation has been written about the impact of colonialism on Africa and whether the new African élites were just as responsible for the parlous state of their economies and civic life. Some things stick in the mind. Here is Walter Rodney in his seminal 1970s work How Europe Underdeveloped Africa: "The most decisive failure of the West in Africa was its failure to develop the technology of agricultural production . . . the vast majority of Africans went into colonialism with a hoe and came out with a hoe." Rodney, from Guyana, was assassinated by his own government for being a radical.

Then welcome independent, copper-rich Zambia in 1964 with no more than 100 graduates and 1,000 secondary-school children out of a population of 4 million. Across the Limpopo, South Africa's apartheid was as much an invention of the British as the Boers. It is little wonder that, like India, new African nations turned at first to other ideologies for their future.

And yet. Show me a Nigerian general who does not live like a millionaire. Compare, a decade ago, the cool splendour of the Addis Ababa Hilton with the thousands of ragged skeletons less than a day's drive away in the famine camps. See the new Mercedes and the Landcruisers on the unpaved, pot-holed dirt roads from the Cape to Cairo, careering past women who carry water urns on their heads. Recite the list of monsters from Amin to Mobutu. Like India, the contrasts and the corruption are extreme.

The Organisation of African Unity, a Nkrumahist project with the bite of a flea, has left one legacy: the resolution not to disturb the colonial boundaries even though in so many places tribes were divided or casually thrown together. It did prevent chauvinist invasions, but 12 of the 48 new African states since 1957 have experienced tribal civil war as well as wars of liberation. Tribalism, the great unspoken force in Africa, has been a benefit and a curse. Occasionally, destructively, it is self-evident: Ibos against Yorubas, endless faction fights in the South African mining compounds, Hutu against Tutsi. But it is also a cohesive moral source, embedded deep in the communalism of African history. The family, the village and the tribe are still the dearest connections to be defended.

Yet much of Africa was quasi-feudal before the white man came and slaves were traded as captives by their own people. See, still, the deference shown to the traditional chiefs and princes, the ogas and obas, often the source of local patronage. In such distorted relationships, driven by tradition and poverty, how can independently minded democrats thrive?

MERSEYSIDE in Britain became rich on slaves, then palm oil. The gold of the Witwatersrand and the diamonds of Kimberley built the Randlords' houses on London's Park Lane. Ghana's cocoa assuaged the West's sweet tooth. Zambia's copper wired the world. Namibia's uranium fuelled the atom bomb. And the Africans were left with the hoe.

The circular discussions will go on. In the midst of poverty, white elephants have multiplied for the vainglorious: the Basilica of Our Lady at Peace in Yamoussoukro, the rural birthplace of the former president of the Ivory Coast, is the largest Christian church in the world. Gabon once had the highest per-capita consumption of pink champagne. But who can deny the decades of degradations visited on the Ogoni people of the Niger Delta by Shell? The other question to be asked is: why have successive Nigerian governments allowed it to happen? The answer, again, lies in African roots. The Ogonis are a small minority tribe of no power and of no consequence. To the Nigerian military élite, drawn largely from the aristocratic north, they are mere children. But Ken Saro-Wiwa, just like Steve Biko, did not die in vain.

A new generation is coming. Urban, educated, cynical about its leaders, economically driven, even angry. The red soil of Africa will probably absorb yet more blood and the blame will be apportioned as usual. But responsibility is a many-sided affair. Colonialism deformed and failed Africa. Its new leaders, many starting out with noble motives, were in turn crippled by uneven terms of trade and the lack of an educated base. Tribalism, as in Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union and Northern Ireland, erupted once the crumbling structures of authority began to be challenged.

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Le Monde

Taxing times, but Jospin stays on top

COMMENT
Patrick Jarreau

EXACTLY a year ago, France's then prime minister, Alain Juppé, in a bid to get the French to forgive him for the succession of higher taxes he had introduced since the summer of 1995, was on the verge of announcing a reduction in income tax over five years.

Now the prime minister, Lionel Jospin, is calmly planning an increase in tax revenue of 15 billion francs ($2.5 billion) in 1998, half to come from companies, and the rest from individuals.

Juppé's promised favour to the taxpayer failed to make him any less unpopular. Jospin's fiscal rigour seems unlikely to affect the high opinion-poll ratings that he still enjoys after 100 days in office.

The favourable image that Jospin managed to acquire in the eyes of the electorate — which was largely responsible for the victory of the left in June's general election — has not been seriously affected by the first hiccups in the government's performance. Indeed, it may even have improved, to judge from opinion polls which show that the population at large is well disposed towards members of the government.

Ministers in Jospin's government have displayed undeniable skill as "cheerleaders". They have succeeded in creating a positive atmosphere, whereas their predecessors inspired nothing but boredom and gloom.

As the former president, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, pointed out during the general election campaign, the French did not necessarily wish for a change of government. All they wanted was "to be governed in a different way".

The change of government and the arrival of a new majority in parliament could have proved either a disaster or an illusion — a disaster because of the implications of campaign promises or the new team's inexperience; an illusion if it emerged that a change of government had yet again resulted in a continuation of the same old policies.

The prime minister and the government made neither of those mistakes. So far, the electorate's view seems to be that the seriousness of the government's approach has not been called into question.

At the same time, the government's policy is perceived as being different from its predecessor's. The difference lies partly in its way of going about things: without losing one iota of his authority, Jospin has allowed room for debate — something Juppé seemed to delight in stamping on.

Juppé went all-out for a style of government where the impetus came from on high. The aim was to prove to the French that the leaders they had chosen would not shirk their duty and that there was a strong will operating in the highest echelons of state.

Jospin, on the contrary, strives to convince the French that their contradictory worries, aspirations and desires are being taken into consideration, and that the final decision emerges from an airing of opinions that divide the population just as much as they do ministers.

To some extent, it is through its actual decisions — and not just through the way these are prepared or taken — that the government has broken new ground. It has so far managed to seem innovative without risking criticism for lack of realism.

This marks a break not only from the Juppé government, but also from the orthodoxy elaborated during the previous Socialist term of office, from 1988 to 1993. What Jospin, Martine Aubry and Dominique Strauss-Kahn, in their different ways, had in common during those years was the fact that they only reluctantly went along with the status quo, the main feature of prime minister Pierre Bérégovoy's "managerial" Socialism. Now that they are in power, they have shown they intend to be movers and shakers.

Jospin's policy statement before parliament in June showed that he does not mind adopting the sort of tone that enabled Jacques Chirac to win the 1995 presidential election — in other words, he eschewed the kind of lazy political thinking that holds, as regards unemployment for example, that "everything has been tried" and one simply has to resign oneself to that fact.

In his policy statement, Jospin reiterated the need for a renewal of the "republican pact" and for a re-establishment of the link between French citizens and their representatives.

During the summer, Aubry's plan to combat youth unemployment and the salvoes fired against the education system by the new education minister, Claude Allègre, suggested that the government intended to do what it had said it would do. This had proved to be a very successful campaign technique employed by Chirac against Edouard Balladur, his rival in the presidential race.

Jospin and his ministers seem, with greater conviction than their predecessors, to have resuscitated belief in the ability of those in power to seize the initiative when dealing with constraints imposed by the economic situation or the European timetable.

Juppe told the French: "That's the way it is. There's no alternative." They now have a prime minister who organises a collective search for solutions to problems instead of announcing that there is only one solution — or none at all.

Up to now it has been a question of how the decision-making process is carried out; the time has now come for the crunch of the actual decisions themselves. Jospin has succeeded in his first test, putting together a government team that has carried conviction with the Greens, the Communists and even the Socialists themselves.

The question now is: will the decisions made by the government prove to be as successful as the method that was used to arrive at them?

(September 9)

History clouds Japanese PM's visit to China

Philippe Pons in Tokyo

THE visit to China by the Japanese prime minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, which ended on September 7, did little to dispel the cloud hanging over Sino-Japanese relations, only days before the 25th anniversary of the normalisation of relations between the two countries. Although the atmosphere is described by Tokyo and Beijing as "satisfactory", it is in fact coloured by a distinct, if muted, mutual distrust.

Hashimoto tried to exorcise the past by visiting Shenyang (formerly Mukden), in former Manchuria, as well as such traditional destinations for official Japanese visitors as Beijing, Shanghai and Xian.

It was near Shenyang that a bomb attack against South Manchurian railways, carried out in September 1931 by the Japanese but blamed on the Chinese, served as a pretext for reprisals. The so-called "Manchurian incident" paved the way for Japanese aggression in China.

In Shenyang, Hashimoto visited a museum devoted to those events, from which phrases like "the crimes of devils" had been temporarily removed and only the less contentious photographs and captions left in place.

"We must assume our historic responsibility, but not remain obsessed by the past," the Japanese prime minister said. He expressed his "most sincere remorse", echoing the words of his predecessor, Tomiichi Murayama, in 1995.

Hashimoto is the first Japanese prime minister to visit the former puppet state of Manchukuo set up by the Japanese in 1932. But he avoided Nanjing, which in 1937 was the scene of one of the most tragic episodes of the war in China: the Japanese sacked the city and massacred its civilian population with bayonets.

While Japan's recognition of its responsibility remains a sensitive issue, the real differences of opinion between the two countries are of more recent origin, and concern the balance of power in the region.

Beijing is worried about the re-orientation of the Japanese-American alliance, the broad outlines of which are due to be made public on September 24. The de facto extension of the defence perimeter of Japan, which has pledged to support United States forces in the zone bordering on its territory, includes Taiwan.

The Chinese prime minister, Li Peng, has reiterated that China will not tolerate Japan and the US extending their security system to Taiwan. But, as expected, Beijing failed to get Hashimoto to agree that the island should be formally excluded from the area covered by the alliance.

The latent tension over the regional balance of power has overshadowed what has been the main element of the Sino-Japanese relationship over the past 25 years: economic co-operation. China is Japan's fifth-largest export market and its second-largest supplier. Trade between the two countries is growing at a rate of 10 per cent a year, and will reach $67 billion this year.

China, which this year will again be the main beneficiary of Japanese government aid, is due to receive $1.6 billion in low-interest loans to finance environmental protection schemes.

(September 9)

Cubans hold 'bomber from El Salvador'

Jean-Michel Caroit in Havana

CUBAN authorities announced on September 10 that they had arrested a "Salvadorean mercenary", Raul Ernesto Cruz Leon, who had admitted carrying out a number of bomb attacks in Havana between July 4 and September 4. The targets were a restaurant and several hotels. The last attack caused the death of an Italian businessman.

According to the Cuban interior ministry, Minint, "investigations have shown beyond all doubt that the operation was meticulously organised out of Miami by a subversive structure linked with the Cuban-American National Foundation [Canf]". The fiercely anti-Castro Canf, headed by Jorge Mas Canosa, is the most powerful organisation of Cuban exiles in the United States.

Minint said traces of explosives had been found in the man's bag, on his hands and under his fingernails. He was carrying a list of Cuban tourist facilities, electrical equipment and diagrams showing how to plant explosive devices.

The man is described as a former parachutist in the Salvadorean army, who was taught how to handle explosives by US instructors. Investigators say he was paid $1,500 per bomb attack, and that he describes himself as "a reckless adventurer who does not care what target or country he is assigned to".

"Cuban security has known of the existence in El Salvador of a network of mercenaries involved in terrorism and drugs trafficking who have close links with Cuban counter-revolutionaries in Miami," Minint said. It added that since April 1994 it had learnt of "more than 30 terrorist plans . . . organised out of Miami by Canf and other counter-revolutionary groups".

It criticised "the use of foreign mercenaries to damage the country's tourist programme and economy" and lashed out at the "Miami press, which has tried to mislead international public opinion" by claiming that the Cuban army and Minint had been responsible for the attacks.

Minint had more than once supplied the US authorities with information, and was surprised that "the United States' experienced and sophisticated security and intelligence services had failed to foil such plans or arrest those responsible".

Washington, while not ruling out the possibility that Miami groups may have been involved, says it has received no such information from Cuba.

While Cuba's main internal dissident movements have unequivocally condemned the attacks, Canf published a full-page statement in a Miami newspaper, Nuevo Herald, saying it supported "any act of internal rebellion" and arguing that "the Cuban people are entitled to choose any instrument available to them in order to obtain their freedom".

Tourism, which has become Cuba's main source of hard currency, has turned into a nightmare for the island's security services. "We have to act cautiously so as not to frighten off foreign visitors," one Cuban leader said.

(September 12)

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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Sitar supremo

Ravi Shankar talks to
Patrick Labesse

YOUR friendship with George Harrison dates from well before the CD you've just brought out with him, Chants Of India.

We first met in London in 1966. I was touched by his love of Indian music. He wanted me to teach him the sitar. Today I regard him as both a disciple, a son and a friend. We've already worked together on several projects.

Apart from Harrison, many other Western musicians have been taught by you. One was the jazz saxophonist, John Coltrane. Was he a good student?

Excellent! But we met all too briefly — four or five sessions, no more. He had hoped to spend six weeks with me in Los Angeles, but unfortunately he died shortly beforehand. I taught him what I could. I explained what *ragas* were, the art of improvisation and the spirit behind all that.

Isn't there something paradoxical about wanting both to preserve a tradition and to confront it with completely different musical worlds?

Yes. I've been criticised for that. I've caused controversy. But people are always trying to pigeonhole you. I learned an ancient and pure tradition, but as a child I lived in Paris for several years with my brother, the dancer Uday Shankar. The years I spent in the West opened up different musical horizons to me. I like experimenting with new things, writing film music, using Japanese musical instruments like the *shakuhachi* [a kind of flute], working with jazz musicians and so on. I've two separate identities: the composer and the sitar player. It all slots together, but people don't always realise it.

What's the difference between the two great traditions of classical Indian music, the north Indian, or Hindustani, and the south Indian, or Carnatic?

The split took place in the 12th century, but they are fundamentally very similar. Carnatic music is more composed and structured in style, rather like Western music. In the north we have a freer way of playing. Music was introduced there by maharajas and nawabs, who were scattered over a wide area. That resulted in different styles.

In the south, people used to get together in temples. Everyone listened to the same thing. There were no differences in the playing style. That's where the distinction lies.

Then there are specific technical characteristics. The language isn't the same and the accompaniment varies. In the north it's the *sarangi* [a bowed instrument] that follows the tune. In the south it's the violin [introduced from Europe in the 18th century].

Is there any project particularly close to your heart at the moment?

I'm one of those people who, having just completed one project, is already thinking of the next. I've lots of plans. My government has asked me to give a concert to celebrate the 50th anniversary of India's independence. It will probably take place in India in February or March.

(September 7-8)



Ravi Shankar: 'I like experimenting' PHOTO: ROBERT CARPENTER-TURNER

Chants of India
Angel Records

WAS there any real point, musically, in once again bringing together one of the finest exponents of the Indian musical tradition and a former Beatle who is deeply into meditation? Although it contains many inspired delights, such as Gaayatri, Chants Of India is a puzzling album.

At times overblown to the point of absurdity, with ethereal little snatches of harp and violins swathed in schmaltz, the album, produced by George Harrison, tries to convince us that thin female voices combined with male murmurs (including Harrison's) are capable of generating Vedic purity and perfection.

Recorded in Madras and London by the New York company Angel Records, Chants Of India is a perfect example of Ravi Shankar's tireless determination to teach the younger generation in the West how to appreciate the music of his country (in this case, Sanskrit chants from the Vedas and Upanishads). But was it really such a good idea to let Harrison play the glockenspiel?

Ike, drugs and rock 'n' roll

Stéphane Davet

TINA TURNER performs in sports stadia. Ike, her former husband, mentor and discoverer, is happy to appear at places like the Maxwell Café, one of the very few Paris clubs where you can hear genuine blues and rhythm-and-blues.

Ike is an unjustly forgotten living legend. How many of those who recently celebrated the 20th anniversary of Elvis Presley's death realise that in 1951 Ike Turner recorded Rocket 88, the single that laid the foundations of rock 'n' roll?

The neatly bearded Turner, who still cuts an athletic figure at 65, is quick to set the record straight. "In the early fifties a young white trucker would come and hide behind my piano at a Memphis club for blacks only," says Turner. "He listened, and he also watched how I moved my legs. Fifteen years later, the man who had by then become Elvis Presley came up to me in the lobby of a Las Vegas hotel and said: 'The kid behind the piano was me!' The role of blacks in the history of rock 'n' roll has always been underestimated."

Turner opened his Paris gig this month by playing a few classic boogie-woogie numbers on piano — a reminder of how he first started out as a jazz musician. "It was Pinetop Perkins, Sonny Boy Williamson's pianist, who showed me my first boogie-woogie chords. I'd never heard anything as exciting before. My mother wanted to pay for me to have classical piano lessons, but I preferred to spend the money on pool and to learn music with the bar pianist."

Turner then took up the guitar, taking the emphatic style of Clarence Gatemouth Brown as his model. On stage at the Maxwell Café, the former leader of the Kings of Rhythm seized his guitar with the same spectacular ferocity that once so impressed Keith Richard. In Turner's diamond-studded grip, the instrument did not so much wail as work itself up into a lather.

Turner is less well known as a composer than as a revue leader. With Annie Mae Bullock, whom he met one evening at a St Louis club in 1956, he succeeded in putting together one of the finest musical groups of the sixties. Ike soon gave Bullock, whom he married, the pseudonym "Tina". The two of them formed a duo — combining an unrepentant macho with a hysterical female — which took America by storm. A group of equally torrid dancing girls, the Ikettes, used to accompany them on stage.

At the Maxwell Café a new generation of Ikettes electrified the audience. Wearing clinging leotards covered with a design of silver spiders and their webs, they marched on stage to the sound of "Land of a Thousand Dances" — three shapely black women led by a blonde, Jeannette, who looked as though she had stepped out of a Midwest trucker's calendar.

Jeannette — the new Mrs Turner — had the typically white voice of a woman country-and-western singer, while her black sisters sang in a huskier soul style. Ike's guitar and the brass of his Big Blues Band were suitably strident.

In her autobiography, I, Tina, Ike's ex-wife exposed the strange disciplinary methods that he imposed on his women dancers. It would seem that he has since stopped maltreating them or demanding sexual favours.

"Ike is an adorable guy, almost shy," Jeannette insists. "When it comes to his work he won't accept any compromises." Turner agrees. "I'm a perfectionist, and I know how to get the best out of people. But I have no hesitation in cracking down on those who step out of line."

Turner fell into obscurity after his break-up with Tina in 1975, and allowed his life to be ruined by cocaine. "At first it was just a way of having a good time. Then I became seriously hooked and spent thousands of dollars on treatment for addiction. But I always relapsed. Prison was the only solution." After getting into trouble with the law more than once, Turner was given a four-year jail sentence. He was released in 1991.

The history of black American music is strewn with male tragedies — the sudden deaths of Otis Redding, Sam Cooke and Marvin Gaye, the trials and tribulations of James Brown, Sly Stone and Ike Turner — which contrast with the success of such female counterparts as Diana Ross, Aretha Franklin, Dionne Warwick and Tina Turner.

Just a touch of bitterness can be detected behind Ike Turner's apparent joviality: "In the United States the only people who really make it are white men and black women."

Turner has nevertheless succeeded, in his modest way, in relaunching his career. He may not always quite get it right, his voice may have lost some of its power, and his Ikettes may seem pale without Tina. But Ike's old repertoire has a youthful zest — to wit his exhilarating "Proud Mary" — that still turns you on.

(September 6)

Bridge divides opinion over Kyoto heritage

Philippe Pons in Tokyo

A BRIDGE over the Seine has sparked a controversy in the Japanese city of Kyoto. Next year has been declared "French year" in Japan, and one of the high points of the calendar is due to be the construction of a copy of Paris's celebrated Pont des Arts, a footbridge that connects the Louvre with the Institut de France.

According to the Asahi Shimbun newspaper, the project has caused an outcry among the inhabitants of Japan's former imperial capital.

The project was an idea that President Jacques Chirac put up to Kyoto city council during his visit to Japan in November 1996. The plan is for the bridge to span the Kamo river in the heart of the old Pontosho quarter, an area celebrated for its geisha houses and terrace restaurants overlooking the river.

The superior of the Shinmei-in temple, Masumi Tanaka, has just written to the French president asking him to abandon the project, which pays scant respect to the local environment. Chirac has apparently been reluctant to get involved in the controversy, preferring to allow the matter to be settled in Japan.

But the debate has implications that go beyond Kyoto. The city is part of world heritage. Environmentalists, shopkeepers and academics have condemned the project on the grounds that it will destroy the charm and architectural harmony of the centre of Kyoto. "Friendship between France and Japan should respect the specific cultural characteristics of each country," they contend. The owner of a restaurant patronised by geishas is organising a petition.

The project, which is expected to cost $5 million, was unveiled at the end of last month. Work on it is due to start by the end of the year. Kyoto city council, which has the support of some local inhabitants, says the new bridge will encourage pedestrian traffic.

That argument carries little weight compared with the damage the urban landscape will suffer. This is an area where Kyoto city council has already lost all credibility. Few historic cities have been so comprehensively blighted within the space of a few decades. The latest blot on the landscape is the new railway station, a huge concrete-and-glass building designed by Tadao Ando and erected by the council to celebrate the city's 1,200th anniversary.

Although Kyoto's temples have survived, visitors discover fresh eyesores each time they come to the city. Most inhabitants react with fatalism. Only the communists stick up for the city's heritage. Their encouraging results at the polls bear witness to the inhabitants' approval of their stance.

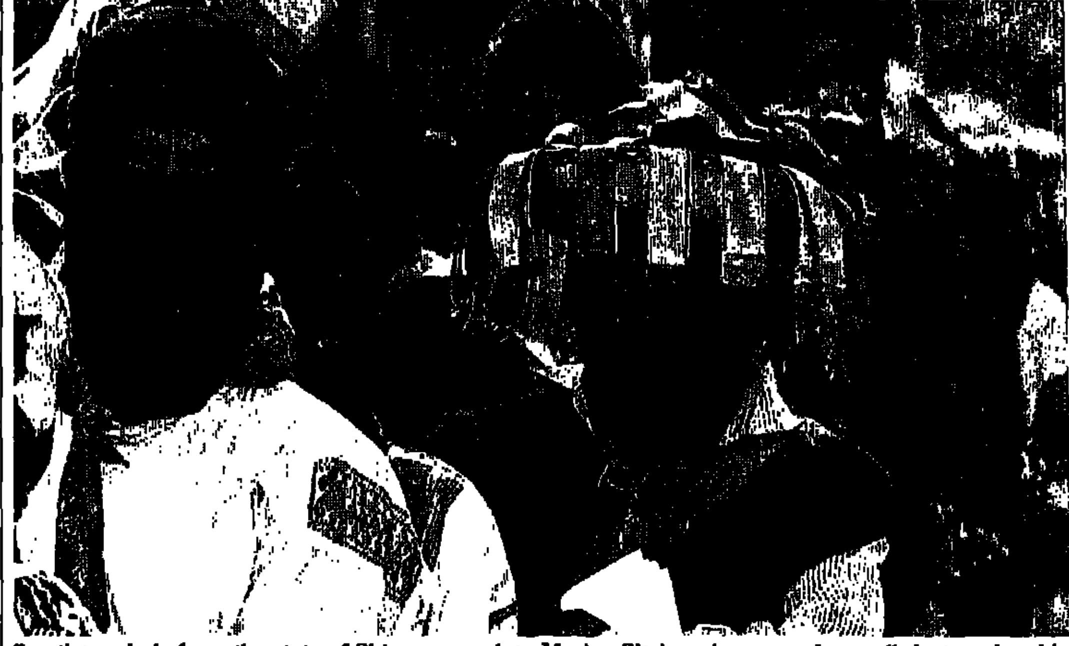
There can be little doubt that the Pont des Arts will ruin the atmosphere of Pontosho, since it will cut off the view from Sanjo Bridge to Shijo Bridge. But then the charm of the area has already been marred by the presence of massage parlours along the narrow street of traditional houses that runs parallel to the river.

One can only assume that this morally questionable trade has been authorised by the city council. It is a pity, then, that France is taking part in a scheme which a section of the Kyoto population regards as yet another "carbuncle" on the city's skyline.

(September 10)

Le Monde
Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

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Zapatista rebels from the state of Chiapas march to Mexico City's main square for a rally last weekend in an effort to highlight their demands for indigenous rights PHOTOGRAPH: HERIBERTO RODRIGUEZ

Mexico Airborne Anti-Drug Unit Arrested

Molly Moore in Mexico City

THE ENTIRE staff of a special Mexican unit responsible for intercepting drug-running aircraft has been arrested after it allegedly used one of its own planes to smuggle cocaine from the Guatemalan border to a government hangar here in the capital, Mexican officials said.

The arrest of 18 pilots, navigators, mechanics and others assigned to the air interdiction branch of the Mexican attorney general's anti-drug office is the latest scandal involving Mexico's top law enforcement agency, which has been plagued for months by revelations of drug-related corruption.

According to the attorney general's office, members of the unit who were based at Tapachula, near the Guatemalan border in Chiapas, Mexico's southernmost state, used the American-built Grumman XC-AA transport plane to ferry at least 132 pounds of cocaine to the international airport in Mexico City. The sparsely patrolled border area, marked by rugged mountain terrain, is a major frontier crossing point for illicit drugs from South and Central America into Mexico by air, sea and land.

A spokesman for the attorney general said the interdiction unit was ending a 15-day duty tour at the remote outpost and had returned the aircraft to its hangar at the Mexico City airport on September 2 when drug-sniffing dogs discovered the cocaine stuffed in three suitcases aboard the plane. Some of those arrested apparently had been trained in drug suppression techniques by the U.S. Customs Service; a Customs Service official said the U.S. agency routinely instructs Mexican pilots and technicians in reading radar and infrared sensors used in air interception operations.

The attorney general's office and members of an air-interdiction team that was not involved in the arrests offered conflicting versions of how the cargo of cocaine was uncovered.

According to the official account, members of the attorney general's anti-drug agency were conducting random checks of its planes when the cocaine-packed suitcases were discovered. But a member of an air interdiction team that frequently uses the same airport hangar disputed this, telling a reporter federal authorities never examine government aircraft, thus making it possible for drugs to be transported freely.

The attorney general's office said it is investigating the extent to which anti-drug enforcement agents might have been using government aircraft to transport drugs within Mexico and beyond its borders.

Attorney General Jorge Madrazo Cuellar, in the course of a verbal assault on him by opposition lawmakers last week, said he has been embarrassed by the corruption in his agency. He told lawmakers he has been forced to seek more and more help from the military because "I couldn't find civilians who could demonstrate the honesty and efficiency for the work."

But lawmakers complained the military has not proven to be any more honest. The country's former anti-drug chief, army Gen. Jesus Gutierrez Rebollo, is standing trial on charges that he was on the payroll of Mexico's largest drug syndicate, the Juarez cartel. Additional military officers — including two generals — are among 18 anti-drug officials under investigation stemming from the theft of a half-ton of cocaine from the attorney general's branch office in the border town of San Luis Rio Colorado.

Mexico City residents held passionate street protests in response to another law enforcement scandal — local police accused of executing three young men after their arrest in a poor neighborhood.

Sexual Harassment 'Endemic' in Army

Dana Priest

A MAJOR internal investigation of gender relations in the Army has found endemic sexual harassment "crossing gender, rank, and racial lines" and even more pervasive job discrimination that is undermining the integration of women in the largest branch of the armed forces.

A panel of senior Army officials concluded in a report released last week that the Army "lacks the institutional commitment" to treat men and women equally. The report also found the Army's system for reporting abuse is broken and a disturbing number of soldiers do not trust their leaders to address gender issues fairly or effectively. "Passive leadership has allowed sexual harassment to persist," the panel concluded.

The panel's work, commissioned eight months ago in the wake of the sexual abuse scandal at the Army's Ordnance Center and School at Aberdeen, Maryland, is the most comprehensive examination to date of how men and women work together in the military. The panel visited 59 Army facilities worldwide and surveyed 30,000 troops, asking about their experiences as well as their attitudes toward the opposite sex.

After preliminary findings by the panel were given to Army leaders months ago, officials revamped the selection process for drill instructors, added staff to training barracks, introduced a week of "human relations" classes to basic training and assigned a three-star general to oversee training centers. In all, the Army is considering 128 recommendations from the panel.

Army Secretary Togo D. West Jr. acknowledged that gender discrimination and harassment were serious problems in the service. But he maintained that criminal sexual abuse like that at Aberdeen, in which drill sergeants preyed on trainees, was "an aberration."

The panel's chairman, Maj. Gen. Richard S. Siegfried, concurred. "We do not have soldiers cowering in fear, it just isn't there."

The Army "is a wholesome and safe place for Army soldiers to do our job," West said. He said the Army remains the world's premier fighting force.

The panel's survey found that 84 percent of Army women and 80 percent of Army men reported they had experienced offensive and sexual behavior, unwanted sexual attention, coercion and/or assault. "Soldiers seem to accept such behaviors as a normal part of Army life," the report said.

About 22 percent of the women and 7 percent of the men said they had been sexually harassed in the past year. What disturbed and surprised Army officials was that an even larger percentage — 51 percent of the women and 22 percent of the men — said they faced job discrimination because of their sex.

"We speak, but it's as if we don't exist," a female noncommissioned officer told panel members.

"You can't get away with saying blacks shouldn't be in the Army," another female soldier said, "but you can say women shouldn't be."

Members of Congress have closely followed the Army's response to the Aberdeen scandal and have warned they will intervene if the Army does not find remedies and apply them swiftly.

Army Chief of Staff Dennis J. Reimer blamed the problems cited in the report largely on what he called "organizational faults" brought on by downsizing, leadership failure "for selective individuals" and the need to "place more emphasis on values". Speaking to critics who believe the Army is sacrificing its warrior culture to integrate women, he added, "This isn't about going soft, it's about treating people with dignity and respect. The two are compatible."

Women make up 14 percent of the Army's 480,000 soldiers and that percentage is expected to climb, since nearly 20 percent of new recruits are women.

The Aberdeen scandal broke last November when the Army revealed that a handful of trainees had accused drill instructors of having sex with them. Some women alleged they had been raped. Over the next months, 11 noncommissioned officers and one captain were accused of criminal misconduct.

In response, the Army interviewed every female trainee who had been at the Aberdeen school in the previous two years and opened a sexual harassment hot line, which was flooded with calls and helped end careers of several generals. Criminal investigators pursued more than 1,000 serious allegations.

Then its top enlisted man, Sergeant Major of the Army Gene C. McKinney, was charged with sexual misconduct involving six female service members. His preliminary hearing, which ended last month, was the longest in Army history. He is awaiting a decision by an Army commander about whether there is enough evidence to bring him to court-martial.

Similar scandals rocked other service branches. The Air Force's first female B-52 bomber pilot was discharged for adultery, lying and other charges. Defense Secretary William S. Cohen's choice to become the next chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Joseph W. Ralston, was forced to withdraw when Congress learned he had had an affair a decade ago.

● Faced with overwhelming evidence of divisions between men and women in its ranks, the Army plans to narrow differences in one area that has been a nagging source of irritation for male soldiers: the comparably easy standards for women in their semi-annual fitness test.

The changes were considered before the release of the report on sexual harassment.

Resentment towards women over such issues by men in the Army was illustrated by the results of a survey of 30,000 troops which found that many men believe women receive favorable treatment in the service. Only 50 percent of the male soldiers said they believed that women "pull their load." By contrast, almost all soldiers, men and women, believe male soldiers "pull their load."

On the Middle East Trail

EDITORIAL

SECRETARY OF State Madeleine Albright's public candor on the Middle East is refreshing. Visiting the region, she pronounced her trip less than a success: She did not get the Israelis and Palestinians even to the point where they can consider resuming negotiations. She hammered on Yasser Arafat to step up the struggle against terrorism, including "taking apart the infrastructure of Hamas." The Israelis she told to stop expanding settlements unilaterally. It's good to end the mumbling about procedure and let the parties know she won't return to the region just "to tread water."

Mrs. Albright, however, did not do the one thing the United States might do that goes beyond inducing the Israelis and Palestinians to talk and that actually offers a chance of contributing to an agreement. She did not close the telling gap in American policy — its failure to endorse the Palestinians' goal of a state. She simply pledged her support for the Palestinians' "legitimate political rights" without defining what these might be. This hesitation to accept the obvious and the necessary is what unbalances American diplomacy. The Clinton administration supports security and peace for the Israelis in many concrete ways but denies parallel support for the Palestinians' prime objective.

The administration takes this position out of a desire not to get too far out in front of Israel's seemingly irreducible resistance to Palestinian statehood. The strange thing is, however, that Washington may be behind the curve of Israel's own Likud government. Israeli authorities, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, have been indicating that Israel is open to a Palestinian state with a flag, authority over almost all Arab West Bankers and what is called a "Jerusalem capital" in an undivided Jerusalem. Israel would insist on protections — eavy and intrusive protections — for its security.

It is not too early to start thinking how the United States might help encourage such a negotiation, difficult as it might be. This is where the possibility of a substantive American contribution needs to be explored.

Haitians Angry Over Ferry Tragedy

Serge F. Kovaleski
In Montrouis

MOMENTS BEFORE the sea swallowed the Pride of La Gonave last week, Dadson Fontlis recalls, banter among friends and the sight of romping children were transformed into a cacophony of shrieks, pleas for divine intervention and frenzy as the ferry capsized. Suddenly, water gushed through the upper and lower decks where hundreds of passengers became entwined in a human crush — many trapped behind locked doors.

"What I sadly remember is all these people being thrown on top of each other and begging God to save them, to give them some kind of miracle," Fontlis said. "There were children near me who eventually drowned and were yelling, 'I don't want to die, I don't want to die.'"

The sinking of the ferry on Monday last week — the sixth such disaster in five years in Haiti — claimed an estimated 245 lives. It is believed to have been caused by the passengers, who kept shuffling from one side of the boat to the other in an effort to stop it from listing as it approached the beach here on its regular commuter journey from the nearby island of Gonave. Finally, the human weight caused the 61-foot ferry — which survivors say carried no life jackets — to topple to the left and capsize.

In what he attributes to an act of God, Fontlis, who had been in Gonave to play in a soccer game, was thrown out of an open door on the boat's second level. Though he can't swim, the fit 25-year-old thrashed and kicked his way about 30 yards, close enough to shore that he could stand. "The whole thing was complete panic, but God blessed me in many ways," he reflected.

Fontlis is one of an estimated 35 passengers who lived through the accident, which has focused increased attention on the country's lack of regulation covering transportation of all sorts, as well as on its political paralysis.

Grieving families contended that if the government of President Rene Preval had moved sooner on plans to construct a dock at the beach, where several commuter ferries operate from each day, perhaps the catastrophe could have been avoided. According to survivors, the boat keeled over while turning around in rough waters about 100 yards from shore so passengers could disembark from the rear and be carried to land on the shoulders of workers who charge the equivalent of about 50 cents per person.

Tens of millions of dollars in vital international assistance to Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, continues to be held up because of delays by the government in implementing key reforms, including privatization and modernization of such inefficient state-run enterprises as the phone company.

As for effectively regulating transportation — including the private ferry services, which for many Haitians are the only means of traveling to certain parts of this island nation because of inadequate or nonexistent roads — one Presidential Palace official said, "Yes, there are rules and regulations, but there is no money to enforce them."

During a visit here last week, Preval issued a statement saying the ferry sinking again shows the weaknesses of the country's infrastructure and his administration will continue efforts to provide Haitians with "reliable and sure" maritime transportation.

At the rocky shore near where the wreckage lies under about 120 feet of water, hundreds of families waited to find out if the bodies of their loved ones had been recovered. Ronell Mark, 26, who lost six relatives in the sinking, could barely contain his rage toward the government.

"We Haitians are not a bunch of dogs. I feel so down and depressed as a result of the government not doing enough," he said. "Public transportation, whether on the road or the sea, must be regulated by the state, or else we end up with this horror."

Although a number of survivors have said that about 700 people were on the ferry — including many children, who routinely are not required to pay — the vessel's operator has insisted that no more than the legal limit of 265 tickets were sold for the trip. In February 1993, a ferry sank with about 1,000 people aboard, and as many as 700 are thought to have perished.

Last week, Haitians held demonstrations and accused the government and U.N. personnel assisting in the recovery operation of taking too long to retrieve the dead. By Monday fewer than 100 corpses had been recovered by divers.

Deciding on Puerto Rico

EDITORIAL

SOME of the Republican rank and file are baulking at authorizing an early referendum to allow Puerto Rico to choose permanently the form of its relationship with the United States.

They have no problem authorizing Puerto Rico's nearly 4 million American citizens either to confirm the current well-worn status known as commonwealth or to strike out on the path to independence. But statehood?

Language is only part of the problem, but a large part. Skeptics see the Puerto Rican attachment to Spanish as culturally unacceptable and politically dangerous — a harbinger of hardening ethnic tension on a national scale.

But it is very late in the day for Washington to impose a hard English-language emphasis on a place that was not consulted on language or on much else when the United States took it over from Spain in 1898. It tempts charges of bad faith to say statehood is an option and then to demand prompt changes in the still-evolving pattern of English-Spanish usage that has developed over a century's time.

Another Republican worry is that a state of Puerto Rico would flood Congress with Democratic legislators. As it happens, similar predictions of political tilt in Alaska and Hawaii were confounded by events. Some in the GOP suggest a strong stand on Puerto Rican statehood is the key to winning the crucial Hispanic vote in major states.

A further concern is the additional cost of extending full social benefits to a place notably poorer than the poorest state. This is troublesome, but in any fair scheme of things, it cannot be allowed to overwhelm the central consideration, which is political. Puerto Ricans are American citizens without full political rights. This began by imperial accident a century ago and must be corrected by democratic design now.

We are not here arguing for statehood; we are waiting for the president and Congress to spell out the options that would be put to Puerto Ricans in a referendum. That is Washington's first task, and with it comes an obligation to honor whatever Puerto Rico's choice turns out to be. But for that to happen there must be absolute clarity on what are the costs and benefits and the legal and political implications of each option that the people of Puerto Rico are to weigh.

Canada to Ban Land Mines

Howard Schneider in Toronto

CANADA WILL destroy all its land mines this fall in hopes of prodding other countries involved in negotiating a worldwide ban on the weapons to do the same, Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy said last week in Oslo.

Government negotiators were meeting in the Norwegian capital to prepare a draft treaty proscribing manufacture, sale and use of anti-personnel mines. Scattered in millions throughout current and past battle zones in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Angola and other countries, they injure or kill an estimated 500 people each month.

Their removal from such areas, and the creation of an international treaty to prevent their future use, has become the object of a major international campaign made prominent in the past year when Diana, Princess of Wales, visited mine blast victims and mine-clearing operations in Angola and Bosnia.

Axworthy has been a leader in formulating the treaty, and Canada last fall destroyed two-thirds of its stockpile of mines as a symbol of its commitment to their elimination around the globe. In a speech to non-governmental organizations involved in the issue, Axworthy said Canada would destroy its remaining mines before the scheduled treaty signing in early December. He urged other countries to do the same, as quickly as possible.

"The humanitarian concern that motivated the [treaty talks] compels us to seek the earliest possible entry into force for the ban," Axworthy said. "We should continue to encourage and applaud unilateral steps . . . Every anti-personnel mine cleared or destroyed is a mine that will not take a victim nor find its way into the ground."

Canada had about 95,000 mines in its inventory when it destroyed the majority of them last year, said Defense Minister Art Eggleton. The remaining 30,000 are up to 25 years old, an aging stockpile that Eggleton said the country has no reason to keep. The last time Canada used land mines was in the Korean War, nearly a half-century ago.

Canada will be the sixth nation to destroy its anti-personnel mines. The other five are Austria, El Salvador, Norway, the Philippines and Belgium, according to Canadian foreign affairs officials.

More than 100 nations participated in the Oslo talks which were expected to conclude on Friday. Although some major countries, such as China and Russia, are not involved — and the United States is seeking modifications to the proposed treaty — leaders in the drive to ban mines say they hope to persuade them to join before the treaty is signed in three months.

Clinton Wants Computer Glitch Fixed

Rajiv Chandrasekaran and Stephen Barr

TRYING to fend off a huge government computer crisis two years from now, the Clinton administration is expected to bar four federal agencies from buying new computer equipment until they have fixed critical systems affected by the "year 2000" bug.

The Office of Management and Budget intends to take the unprecedented step with the Agriculture, Transportation and Education departments, as well as the U.S. Agency for International Development, senior administration officials said. The OMB has identified 12 other agencies, including the Defense, Justice and Treasury departments, that are on the cusp of the computer-purchase prohibition.

Most large computer systems use a two-digit dating system that assumes that 1 and 9 are the first two digits of the year. Without specialized reprogramming, the systems will think the year 2000 — or 00 — is 1900, a glitch that could cause most to go haywire unless the problem is fixed.

The decision could hurt efforts to modernize government computer systems in these departments. But administration officials said the effects of failing to fix the year 2000 computer glitch could be far more severe.

NATO's Hollow Expansion

COMMENT
Richard Cohen

A BUNCH of guys (and some gals) last week signed a statement supporting the enlargement of NATO. The signatories included some people who seem to want their cake and eat it too. In other words, they want a strong and expanded NATO but they also don't want it to do much — especially in Bosnia.

For instance, included on the list assembled by the New Atlantic Initiative were the likes of Colin Powell, James Baker III, Warren Christopher and Tony Lake who, either in the Bush or the Clinton administration, were known for wanting to steer as far away from Bosnia as possible. For a while, they got their way and the United States left the problem of Bosnia to the Europeans to solve. Things soon went from bad to worse.

Now, though, the United States has troops in Bosnia as part of a NATO force — and a determination on the part of the Clinton administration to stop a bunch of liars and opportunists from making a mockery of the promises they made in signing the Dayton peace agreement.

It could be that nothing can stop the Bosnian war from resuming. But the least the United States can do is insist that NATO give it the old college try. NATO cannot simply stay awhile in Bosnia, go home and later argue that nothing in the world is as important as NATO expansion. It is then, of course, that one might ask: For what purpose?

It would be a good question. At the moment, every Clinton administration spokesman who goes up to the Hill tells Congress that U.S. troops are coming home in June — no matter what. This is the date of which much of Washington is so enamored since it suggests an all-important exit strategy. But there is no exit strategy, just a determination on the part of the Pentagon to get out of Bosnia before the United States gets sucked in and Americans are killed. That's understandable. But fear of taking casualties is not a strategy, nor should it be the sole basis for making policy. Nonetheless, June 1998 seems set in stone.

Someone is not being candid here. U.S. troops cannot pull out by that date since, if they do, the entire NATO effort is likely to collapse. If there is one thing the Bosnian conflict has taught us it's that there is no NATO without the United States. No other country can exercise leadership — if only because no other NATO member has the U.S.'s firepower. Given that, it would be too risky for the United States to simply wave goodbye to its allies and sail for home come June. That's especially the case if the Bosnian Serb leader and sociopath Radovan Karadzic remains on the loose.

If Karadzic remains free, if he and his henchmen return to power, if the United States leaves Bosnia on schedule and NATO more or less follows, then what is the point of expanding NATO? What, precisely, will be expanded — a toothless, spineless version of the Washington D.C. motor-vehicle bureau, a bureaucratic labyrinth in which paper goes in and never comes out?

In fact, the future of NATO is inextricably linked to what happens in Bosnia. And that, in turn, is linked to what the United States does. If it leaves Bosnia without finishing the job, then how can NATO be taken seriously anywhere else?

We cannot have it both ways: an expanded and still-important NATO, and a failed effort in Bosnia. Something has to give — and it ought to be the June deadline.

Illegal Influx Hurts U.S. And Mexico

William Branigin

A BINATIONAL study sponsored by the U.S. and Mexican governments has concluded that illegal immigration from Mexico has taken on a life of its own, sustained by expanding networks that link Mexican workers to U.S. employers, with detrimental results for both countries.

In the first joint study of migration from Mexico to the United States, 20 researchers who worked on the project for three years also found that the "currently high levels of migration" may be at a peak and that the pressures behind the flow are likely to ease over the next decade.

"It is to the clear benefit of both countries to work toward eliminating unauthorized migration, which creates costs for both countries and makes migrants vulnerable to exploitation," said the Binational Study on Migration, a report issued by a joint commission.

According to Susan Martin, executive director of the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform and a coordinator of the study, tougher U.S. border controls have increasingly driven illegal migrants to use professional smuggling rings, which often abuse their charges and have raised the level of violence along the border. "The study urges the two governments to work cooperatively to break up these smuggling rings," she said.

U.S. officials said one of the study's most significant results was a recognition by Mexican researchers that the steady exodus of illegal migrants imposes costs not just on the United States, but on Mexico as well. For years, Mexico has done virtually nothing to stop illegal emigration, tending to view it with ambivalence as a major source of foreign exchange — remittances are estimated at between $2.5 billion and $3.9 billion a year — and as an important "safety valve" for a job-scarce economy.

However, the study said, the phenomenon also costs Mexico heavily in a "loss of human capital," especially working-age people with some education and good health, which in turn discourages investment and the training of workers in Mexico and tends to keep their communities mired in poverty. In addition, it said, migration is commonly "accompanied by serious problems of family disintegration" and other ills.

By the Rivers of Babylon

Jonathan Groner

FAITH OR FEAR
How Jews Can Survive
In a Christian America
By Elliott Abrams
Free Press. 237pp. $25.

DOES THE WORLD
NEED THE JEWS?
Rethinking Chosenness and
American Jewish Identity
By Daniel Gordis
Scribner. 302pp. $24.



ILLUSTRATION: JILL KARLA SCHWARZ

FEW GROUPS in America have been as preoccupied with self-analysis as the Jews. The American Jewish community is repeatedly told by its writers and thinkers that it is dying, vanishing, bankrupt of ideas and strength; then, scant years later, that it is vibrantly alive and about to enter a new era of cultural achievement. In the cold light of the 1990 National Jewish Population Study, showing an intermarriage rate of 52 percent and a community declining in numbers and in identification with the Jewish religion, the pessimists are now in the ascendancy. And with good reason. None of the forces that have sustained Jewish identity in America for the past century — solidarity with Israel, the persistence of anti-Semitism, the impact of the Holocaust, Jewish secular ethnicity, political liberalism — seems likely to continue to do so as the 21st century approaches.

Earlier this year, in The Vanishing American Jew, Harvard Law professor Alan Dershowitz gave his take on the bad news. His bottom line: Better and more imaginative Jewish education, the information superhighway, and greater acceptance by the Jewish establishment of secular Jews and of the intermarried will preserve the primarily nonreligious Jewish values that he cherishes. Elliott Abrams's Faith Or Fear and Daniel Gordis's Does The World Need The Jews? are even newer examples of the same genre. Neither Abrams nor Gordis points with pride to the undeniable accomplishments of American Jewry. Instead, both decry American Jews for their superficiality, for their lack of Jewish education and for their failure to take their own traditions seriously.

Here is Abrams, the newly religiously committed former State Department official who now heads the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington: "The fabulous successes of American Jews as individuals have coincided with their community's decline. American Jewry is beginning to evaporate before our eyes . . . Whether American Jews can commit themselves anew to the goal of survival, to reversing the demographic patterns that threaten their collective future, depends on whether they still believe they are above all else members of a religious community. As an ethnic, cultural, or political entity they are doomed."

And here is Gordis, the Conservative rabbi who is a vice president of the University of Judaism in Los Angeles: "Ours is a generation in which people leave Judaism not by making a conscious decision to leave, but just by drifting away. We have no clear conception of what might be special or important about our culture, our religion or our way of life. We have no clue as to why we matter. Free at last, we have no vision of what to make of our freedom."

These sad summaries, coupled with the data and personal observations that underlie them, are evidence of a crisis of faith among American Jews. What prescription can cure this pervasive malady? Abrams and Gordis convincingly dismiss various possible answers to the problem of maintaining Jewish identity. Both, for example, reject a facile Jewish liberalism; the quest for universal health care or for civil rights or even for freedom of religion is not the key to Jewish survival. And both end with an unabashed affirmation of the need for Jews to take seriously the teachings and demands of their tradition. These are demands that often do not coincide with the mores of contemporary American secular society.

Much in the same vein as Dershowitz, Gordis argues that in-depth adult Jewish education is necessary for a renewal of Jewish life. He goes much further, though, proposing that American Jews commence "a serious encounter with chosenness" that will require "tremendous effort and courage" from a community long accustomed to passivity. Similarly, Abrams contends that "the only answer capable of ensuring Jewish continuity in America lies in Judaism," i.e., in a return to traditional observance, although he clearly implies that this need not be strictly Orthodox observance. "For unless the community is based on faith in God, what possible purpose could there be for concern about its survival?" he argues.

This is where he and Gordis part ways. To Abrams, the importance of maintaining Jewish identity is self-evident: God wants the Jewish people to continue. But Gordis, although a rabbi and a believing Jew, wrote his book precisely to provide a rationale for American Jewish survival for an audience that does not necessarily believe in a providential God.

Without saying so explicitly, Gordis takes on the serious challenge posed by historian Norman Cantor in his 1994 survey of Jewish history, The Sacred Chain. Cantor concedes the demographic game, concluding that American Jewry will probably die out and declaring that it won't matter because this fascinating and important ethnic group has made its contribution to the welfare of humanity and is no longer much needed. Gordis says no. He tries to draw out of Jewish texts what he sees as authentically Jewish values that, if Jews only recognized them, would become indispensable guides for world civilization and would give the Jews a continuing *raison d'etre*.

For example: The Talmudic tradition always takes care to preserve opposing views, even those that are ultimately rejected; from this, the world can learn tolerance and moderation. Jews have always held the Torah and its commentaries to be central; the American educational system should therefore cling to a core curriculum and reject a trendy multiculturalism. Jews have often dissented from accepted views but have never burned the Torah scrolls; therefore, the act of flag-burning should not be tolerated in American society or viewed as the harmless equivalent of a leaflet or a political speech.

Whether or not one agrees with these examples Gordis deserves credit for thinking the issue through in this way. It is for these suggestions that his book ought to be remembered as a contribution to the growing literature on what has become known as Jewish continuity.

Abrams's book will probably be remembered by many for the argument he makes that American Jews have overestimated the threat posed by evangelical Christians to Jewish values and that Jews would do well to make common cause with evangelicals on some issues.

But although I do not doubt the survey research showing that fundamentalists are no more anti-Semitic than other Christians, the rhetoric emanating from some parts of the evangelical movement still deserves careful scrutiny. Beyond that, I found Abrams's book more effective as a religious than as a political treatise.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
September 21 1997

Looking Good, Doing Bad

Jonathan Yardley

THE APPEARANCE
OF IMPROPRIETY
How the Ethics Wars Have
Undermined American Government,
Business, and Society
By Peter W. Morgan
and Glenn H. Reynolds
Free Press. 272pp. $25.

THE AUTHORS might have devised a less cumbersome title for this examination of what they call "the post-Watergate Ethics Explosion" — one of my pet theories is that a tongue-twisting title is a kiss of death, whatever the book's merits. But that should not distract us from the strengths of The Appearance of Impropriety. In style it is an awkward mixture of the legalistic and the literary, but in substance it is a thoughtful, provocative analysis of how, in the name of ethics, we have entered an "Age of Appearances" in which what matters most is not the actual regulation of ethics but the appearance of regulation.

The authors are a Washington lawyer (Peter W. Morgan) and a Tennessee academic (Glenn H. Reynolds). How this rather unlikely partnership was struck is a mystery, but it has produced a combination of legal analysis and literary references. The latter are chiefly to the life and work of Henry Fielding, whose great account of life in Augustan England, Tom Jones, provides a background for this chronicle. This is not as improbable as it may seem, for the Augustan Age set high value on both propriety and the appearance of propriety; Fielding had a keen eye for the distinction between the two, and a sharp nose for people who merrily settled for mere appearance in themselves.

As Morgan and Reynolds point out, the parallels between Augustan England and contemporary Washington are clear. Though they also look at the culture of appearances in business, the professions and science, their chief focus is on Washington. What they call "a sort of cultural Big Bang" took place here after the resignation of Richard Nixon, when "we collectively threw ourselves into the most sustained and comprehensive public effort at ethics reform in American history." They describe this as follows:

"We generated new ethical restrictions and requirements at every level of government and among the leading professions. We created ethics agencies, boards and commissions to interpret, implement and police the often complex ethical regulations. We established private ethics centers and new public-interest watchdog groups. We began requiring graduate students to study professional ethics, which then became a practice specialization. We started consulting ethics counselors and retaining ethics testimonial experts. And we encouraged a proliferation of investigative reporters, who — spurred on by the Pulitzers and lucrative book contracts and speaking engagements that rained down on the journalists who uncovered scandals during Vietnam and Watergate — pursued tales of public misfeasance and private immorality with virtually unprecedented vigor. In short, the Big Bang gave birth to a modern Ethics Establishment."

But a couple of funny things happened on the way to this new era of ethical purity: The expected increase in public confidence in institutions where ethics were in question completely failed to materialize, and no evidence suggested that actual improvements in ethical performance occurred. The explanation for this, the authors argue, is simple: The emphasis of the new ethical regulators was purely superficial — a "substitution of appearances for substance, of technicalities for judgment, of opportunism for self-discipline" — and the public immediately recognized it as such. Public cynicism about governmental and private institutions continued to rise, and public disengagement from government grew ever wider.

It is not much of an exaggeration to say that the whole phenomenon is a case study of human nature at its worst. People tend to take the easy way out, and "focusing on appearances is . . . just easier" than rooting out genuinely unethical behavior and practices. It's easier for the investigators, and it's easier for the press: "The entire problem can be short-circuited: Instead of having to learn about the matter in question, critics and commentators can opine sagely that it creates a bad appearance, that a bad appearance undermines confidence just as much as a bad reality, and that [the alleged offenders] have obviously done something wrong even if it is never entirely clear just what."

No place is more hospitable to this than official Washington, where damage control and spin are the chief means of business, where "watch what we say, not what we do" is the motto of choice, where evasion of responsibility is a fine art and where scoring points against one's opponents is the main game. A system of "ethics" that focuses on the appearance of morality rather than the actuality of it, and that invites fishing expeditions by investigative reporters, independent counsels and others, is perfectly suited to Washington, and in little more than two decades it has become as institutionalized as any of the institutions it was supposed to clean up.

RATHER than instruments of reform, the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 and its subsequent spinoffs have turned into agents of evasion and excuses for witchhunts. As the authors point out, the phrase "the appearance of impropriety" has become the operative cliche. It permits people to disguise genuinely bad behavior behind a cloak of apparent propriety, and it permits those so inclined to instigate persecutions of those whose conduct, they claim, presents "the appearance of impropriety."

As an example of the latter, the authors discuss in some detail the cases of David Baltimore, the distinguished scientist who was nearly pilloried for having the courage to stand behind a colleague, and of John McCain and John Glenn, reputable senators whose connection to the savings-and-loan scandal was thin at most but who were roped into the investigation to give it a veneer of bipartisanship.

Like most people, who write about contemporary public issues, Morgan and Reynolds are better at describing and analyzing them than at coming up with feasible solutions. Their proposals — take responsibility, cultivate virtue, et cetera — are unexceptionable, but the chances of implementing any of them in the current climate are unlikely. Still, their analysis is keen and should put a great many people to shame. What they are most likely to present, though, is the appearance of shame.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
September 21 1997

Women Take Lead in Volunteer Force

Amy Joyce

WHEN she was 33 years old, Molly Bogdan left a "nice home, nice car, nice dog, nice guy and nice business" in Albuquerque and headed to Romania as a volunteer with the Peace Corps. She had two successful businesses, no husband and no children. This was the right time, and the Corps, she decided, was the way to "repay the goodness that was given to me."

The Peace Corps is changing and Bogdan is part of the reason why. Today, women, across the range of ages, make up the majority of Peace Corps volunteers — 59 percent for this year's training class, an all-time high. The number of female volunteers and trainees has almost doubled in the last 25 years.

At its inception in 1961, 63 percent of volunteers were men and only 37 percent women; since the early 1970s, the number of female volunteers and trainees has continued to grow. Today, 3,867 women are serving in all 91 Peace Corps countries. Women make up the majority of volunteer ranks everywhere the Peace Corps serves, except in the programs in Asia, where women and men generally are equally represented.

The rise in female volunteers reflects, in part, the increase of women in the work force, according to Peace Corps recruiters. Peace Corps Director Mark Gearan said this trend "really completes the mission of the Peace Corps" because "we send people reflecting our own country."

But also, female volunteers are sought to help meet the increase in Peace Corps programs focusing on women. Many of the major players in countries across the world — particularly at the community level — are women, Gearan said. "Invariably," he said, "the local spark plug in the community is a woman. When you do so much [for the women], you can improve the entire family." He quips that volunteers are sent to assist "the African farmer and her husband."

So, Gearan said, it seems natural and necessary that the number of female volunteers increases as the number of programs involving women increases. "The [cultural] barriers are eased, and the volunteers can go about the mission of our work."

Christopher Doherty, who served in Liberia and the Dominican Republic for the Peace Corps and is now the regional recruitment coordinator, explained the connection. "Some assignments in the Peace Corps are going to ask for women only, the reason being that they're in a different culture working with women's groups which we cannot assign men to," especially women's and infant health issues, Doherty said.

Acknowledging this, the Peace Corps recently announced the Loret Miller Ruppe Fund for the Advancement of Women, which is being established in memory of the woman who directed the Peace Corps from 1981 to 1989 and who died last year. The fund will provide small grants to support the community-based projects that are designed to strengthen the role of women in the development of their countries.

Through these projects, the Peace Corps plans to focus on education, pointing out that in much of the developing world, access to education is limited — especially for girls. The volunteers work to educate the parents and community members on the importance of educating their daughters.

"I'm not a big feminist, but it feels so good to show [the women] that they have a voice," said Bogdan, who worked in a women-in-development program while in Romania. Her project set up a program similar to the "Take Our Daughters to Work" day that is catching on in the United States, except that the Romanian girls are drawn mainly from orphanages.

Bogdan also helped develop Camp GLOW (Girls Leading Our World), a five-day-long camp for Romanian girls, age 11 to 17. GLOW was designed as a girls' leadership camp, with morning workshops to improve decision-making skills and strengthen self-esteem, and afternoons devoted to hiking, face-painting and other bonding experiences.

The camp was started in 1995, mainly as a mentoring program because "the girls don't traditionally have role models" in Romania, said Bogdan. There are now four of these camps in Romania.

Most female volunteers serve in health and education programs. The only area where men outnumber women is in the business program, although not by much: 46 percent of the volunteers and trainees are women.

Sixty-year-old Ava Allsman is a volunteer in the business program. After retiring as a business professor at the University of Colorado, she volunteered for a Peace Corps assignment in the Czech Republic from November 1993 until June 1996.

"It was something I'd always wanted to do, but I couldn't afford it before because I needed to earn a living, was married and had children," said Allsman, who traveled extensively with her late husband, who was an officer in the Air Force. Finally, when her youngest child was a sophomore in college, Allsman found the window in her life where she could fulfill her desire to join the Peace Corps. She helped to start the Junior Achievement Program internationally and now works for the Peace Corps in Washington as a programming and training officer for eastern and central Europe.

Doherty said the increase in female volunteers has also led to women like Allsman becoming more involved in the running of the Peace Corps. "We do have a history of the directorship led by women. But now you find women in other roles, leading divisions within the Peace Corps — many more than in the past," he said.

For Bogdan, when her tour in Romania ended last month, she didn't fall back into place in her old life. Instead, she moved to Washington, where she applied for a job as a Peace Corps recruiter.

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Date of assumption of duties: 1 January 1998.

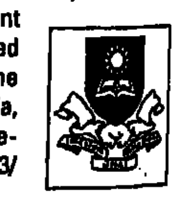
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Job description: Teaching and advising of students, research, tutoring and participation in service functions within the department, the faculty and university.

Date of assumption of duties: 1 January 1998.

Contact persons: Mr Andrew K Kanime at (+264-61) 206-3151 or Ms Monica Heita at (+264-61) 206-3102.

Closing date: 15 October 1997.

Fringe benefits: The University of Namibia offers competitive salaries and the following fringe benefits: ● pension fund/gratuity scheme ● medical aid scheme ● annual bonus ● housing scheme ● generous leave privileges ● relocation expenses.

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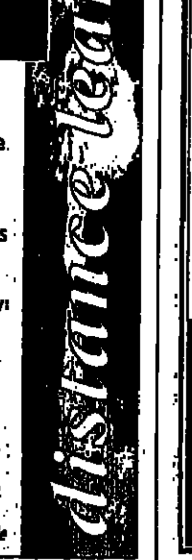
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GUARDIAN WEEKLY
September 21 1997

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Maggie Brown talks to the makers of a new documentary series which shows that the horrors of the Holocaust were carried out by ordinary people

The everyday face of evil

LAST week BBC TV in the UK began a series on the way the Nazis and Hitler operated. It is designed to alter public perceptions, but even more chillingly, it seeks — through oral history and eyewitness accounts — to explain the mentality and the human weakness that Nazism exploited. It is quite different in feel and tone from either the military, battle-based histories of the second world war that one has become used to, or the various accounts of the Holocaust.

The Nazis — A Warning From History also aims to close the gap between historical research and the more impressionistic but inaccurate view held by the public of a barbaric but ruthlessly efficient regime imposed from above by Hitler.

The series is written by Laurence Rees, editor of Timewatch, the BBC's history strand, and Ian Kershaw, professor of Modern History at Sheffield University. They, and a team of researchers, have spent four years on the project.

Rees says his motivation was to provide the all-important historical background for the general public who might, for example, watch a film such as Schindler's List; he wanted to show how the system that produced concentration camps evolved over a 12-year period, with a degree of popular consent in which individuals had some power. The series is designed as social history, as an antidote to the way the period is too often presented — telescoped into a short period of war and horror.

But it does this in a televisual way, by wringing frank testimonies from a host of surviving former Nazis — many of whom are prepared to speak their minds because of their age — combining it with new archive film more readily available since the collapse of the Iron Curtain. For example, Johannes Zahn, a banker who is now in his eighties, says forthrightly: "The general impression was that the Jews had gone too far in Germany; of the 4,800 lawyers in Berlin, 3,600 were Jews."

Both Kershaw and Rees have a mission: they are convinced that, although history may not directly repeat itself, the recent outbreaks of "ethnic cleansing" in the former Yugoslavia and the unstable conditions in the former Soviet Union, give — in Kershaw's words — "scant cause for hope".

They subscribe to the philosopher Karl Jasper's belief that "it was possible for this to happen, and it remains possible for it to happen again at any moment. Only in knowledge can it be prevented."

A central theme of the programmes is that behind the Nazis' displays of military might, staged parades of goose-stepping and Hitler's rabble-rousing oratory, lay a government of chaos and random cruelty, "producing the biggest confusion in government that has ever existed in a civilised state".

A perhaps less surprising fact to emerge is that many ordinary Germans complied with the system as it spread fear and paranoia, becoming informers and collaborators. In one episode, "Chaos and Consent", Rees shows how a chance letter to Hitler led to the creation of the Nazis' children's euthanasia policy, which led to the deaths of thousands of disabled children.

Sometime in late 1938 or early 1939, the father of a child who was born blind, without a leg and with a deformed arm, petitioned Hitler, asking permission to have the child put down. Officials in the Chancellery, run by Phillip Bouhler, an ambitious Nazi, decided to select the letter to show to Hitler. Hitler read the petition and asked his personal physician to examine the child and kill it, if the father's testimony was correct. This led to the drawing-up of detailed criteria for children who were to be "referred for treatment": the list included children who suffered from mongolism, idiocy, spina bifida, and absence of limbs. Initially consent forms were sent to a panel of three paediatricians who acted as assessors: they didn't actually see the children to decide their fate.

This piece of historical fact is made poignant by focusing on the anguished testimony of Gerda Bernhardt, whose retarded younger brother, Manfred, was sent at the age of 10 to a children's hospital in Dortmund, called Aplerbeck. Two years after the "policy" had been introduced, some inhumane neighbours in their block of flats had said it would be best if Manfred was "put away". Gerda describes how they visited him once a fortnight — as often as was allowed — but on what was to be a final visit, they saw him weak and neglected, dressed only in underpants.

A young convert to national socialism is regarded fondly by onlookers

The family were then told he had died a natural death. She asked to see his body, and in one room saw 15 little bodies, all wrapped in white sheets.

Testimonies pieced together from those who assisted at the home say that the senior doctor would select children at the evening meal in the dining room for "immunisation injections", most likely fatal doses of morphine or the sedative, luminal.

Rees says: "By the time Manfred Bernhardt met his death, doctors in homes such as Aplerbeck did not have to fill in forms. In a typical example of how policies could spiral out of control, staff independently selected the children they wanted to kill. The chaotic radicalism inherent in the Nazi system meant that, unlike the fascist states of Italy and Spain, German fascism could never settle to a status quo, however dreadful and repulsive." Kershaw says that Hitler was not like Stalin, a dictator who sent countless letters and orders interfering with policy. He points to a seemingly unimportant speech given by Werner Willikens, state secretary of food, in 1934, outlining the Nazi duty of "working towards the Fuhrer" along the lines and towards the aims he would wish.

Kershaw points to Hitler's frequent bouts of indolence, his reluctance to act, which allowed underlings to fill in many of the administrative details of his vision, often with horrific outcomes. It meant that administrators, for example, had latitude in how they implemented the infamous "Germanisation" of Poland.

In a further attempt to show how the population colluded, the series draws on the work of Robert Gellately, a Canadian professor and the first to uncover the secrets of the Gestapo archive at Wurzburg in southwest Germany. It is one of only three towns in Europe where the records were not destroyed by the Nazis at the end of the war, and the archive contains 18,000 files. In a district of 1 million people, there were 28 Gestapo officials, of whom one half were involved in administrative work.

Gellately found that 80 per cent of all "political crime" was discovered by ordinary people, who were neither paid, nor members of the party. Rees followed Gellately's lead, by investigating the file on Sonja Totzke, who was accused of being too friendly to Jews and of knowing about military matters that should be of no concern to women; Totzke was eventually sent to Ravensbruck, where she is believed to have perished.

One denunciation comes from a then 20-year-old woman, Resi Kraus, who put her signature at the end of it. The two women were neighbours. "Never responds to the German greeting [Heil Hitler], is visited by a woman of Jewish appearance," it says. Kraus, interviewed on screen, confirms her signature, her address, but says she has no recollection of ever visiting the Gestapo.

"I still have the image of Frau Kraus in my mind as we left her after the interview," Rees says. "She was a profoundly unexceptional figure, and thus a deeply troubling one . . . In all respects, other than the denunciation signed with her name that lies in Gestapo files, she appears an ordinary, decent woman — someone who kindly inquired how old my children were and where we planned to go on holiday."

On examination it transpires that, just as the notion that the Gestapo were everywhere is myth, so is the idea that Gestapo officials were fanatical SS officers who ousted decent, law-abiding policemen. "What actually happened was that most of the police remained in their posts when the Nazi regime began; but they did not have to carry on as usual — they were now off the leash." They could disregard the rights of suspects and pursue what, in their view, was a strong law-and-order line.

"It is a remarkable and special thing in the schedule," says Mark Thompson, controller of the BBC2 channel. It is also television at its most powerful.

The Nazis — A Warning From History, a six-part series, is currently running on BBC television in the UK; an accompanying book is available, price £18.99

Whale files reveal frozen assets

Tim Radford on why old records provide clues about the shrinking ice cap

AN AUSTRALIAN scientist delving into whaling records has confirmed what many have suspected: the Antarctic ice cap is shrinking. Between 1950 and 1970, the area covered by sea ice declined by a colossal 25 per cent.

But nobody knows whether this is really a sign of global warming, triggered by the burning of fossil fuels, or simply part of a natural cycle. Since the seventies, scientists have been able to estimate the area covered by ice each year by studying satellite photographs. There have been dramatic alterations in the iceline: 1,300sq km of ice snapped off and floated north from the Larsen shelf last year, and in 1995 an iceberg the size of Oxfordshire calved from the Antarctic peninsula. But, overall, the record has been too brief, and the picture has been ambiguous.

Even so, evidence of a different kind was available all the time. William de la Mare, of the Australian Antarctic Division, reports in the latest issue of Nature magazine that the answers lay in the files of the International Whaling Commission. Whalers have been harpooning in the Southern Ocean since 1904, and they discovered swiftly that whales tended to concentrate near the ice edge. There were good reasons for this.

"The sea ice retreats each spring, exposing plankton which have been dormant over the winter," says Dr John King, of the British Antarctic Survey. "You take this sea ice lid off and they are suddenly able to start photosynthesising. You get this great bloom of phytoplankton. These are fed on by krill and other organisms, and the krill provide food for the whales. The Antarctic ice in the spring is a rich feeding ground for them."

From 1931, the factory ship whaling fleets began hunting in October, and followed the ice line southward through the Australian spring. Each kill was recorded by date and the noon position of the factory ship. De la Mare combed 1.5 million records held by the International Whaling Commission, looking for the southernmost catch at each unique longitude and date.

The picture was not completely clear: latitudes could have shifted a little with whale species, as the blue, humpback and fin whales disappeared and minke became the target. But the overall pattern was clear: there had been a substantial decline in sea ice. Between 1950 and 1970, the average summer sea ice edge moved south by 2.8 degrees — a decline in area of 25 per cent.

The news comes only a few weeks after Greenpeace scientists warned of catastrophe for polar bears and other Arctic creatures if global warming reduces the ice pack over the Arctic region.

British Antarctic Survey scientists are are not convinced that the ice shelves are retreating simply because carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is rising: it could be part of a natural cycle. But they warn that the discovery does not bode well for whale populations.

"It is likely that a sea ice change of that nature would have a major impact," says King. "The retreat of the ice happened at the same time as the near-extinction of the whale. But less sea ice means a smaller food-producing area, which could mean that the whales might never recover their former numbers, even though whaling has stopped."

"We can't say one way or the other," says King. "We still don't understand the complicated ecosystem and how it interacts with sea ice variation."

Letter from Cameroon Robert Lacville

Insect life holds promise

ACROSS the valley we saw a single concrete building perched on a hillock. The Meeting Room. I stopped for a moment to admire the deep green vegetation and the chaos of black boulders that make up the Madara mountains. It was here in Mokolo that German colonials set up base when they arrived a century ago, in the lovely foothills near the Nigerian frontier. Lovely to look at; not so easy to farm. A glimpse at the three maize stalks rising at my feet, planted with great care in a crevice between two rocks, suggested that even farmers must find it tough to give their children three meals every day.

We turned off the mountain track and into the grass, on to one of those narrow bush paths that soak your trousers during the rainy season. Mine were clinging to my ankles by the time we climbed into the square Meeting Room. Nothing else in the village was square. Round huts with pointed thatched roofs were scattered among the rocks. Their doors were oval holes with thatch curtains, each looking out on to an intensely cultivated, irregular space.

The villagers crowded into the concrete cube. The translator told us that a group of schoolchildren decided 10 years ago that they needed to improve their schooling. They worked together on a communal field and made a profit. Now their organisation has three men's groups and three women's groups. A woman called Tekoudembé described the work of her group, called "Insects". Insects are the African byword for hard work and good organisation. I asked the president of the North Cameroon Peasants' Federation sitting beside me what language the villagers were speaking. He didn't know. There are 250 languages spoken in Cameroon, so Cameroonian strangers are as linguistically helpless as foreigners.

Earlier that morning, we were in Toupouri country near Chad, where there are co-operatives of farmers enjoying sufficient rain and plenty of schooling. Cameroon is called "Africa in miniature" because it has everything: oil, minerals, timber, cocoa and coffee, and every climate you can imagine. If the people are poor, it is because the economy has been badly managed. Worse may come. The population of the far north has risen from 1 million to 4 million in 30 years. There are land conflicts, soil degradation, even mild desertification.

I told the villagers of successes with cereal banks, which help communities to survive the "hungry season" before the October harvests. I enthused about seed-selection, which improves yields and protects against money lenders. Tekoudembé asked for a seed store. I replied that even a seed store as magnificent as the Meeting Room would be of no use unless all the villagers combined forces and ceased disputes. The women nodded. The disputatious men laughed with embarrassment. Inwardly, I decided that the way forward would be to organise a separate credit system for women, controlled by women. Keep male and government corruption out of it.

As we walked down the hill, the woman ahead of me adjusted her *pagne*. The face of President Paul Biya was stretched tight across her back, now winking at me, now grimacing as if he could read my thoughts about mismanagement at the top, poverty at the bottom.

Heavy breather

Tim Radford

ELEPHANT seals may be big and breathtakingly ugly, but they hold world records for lung power. Mike Fedak from the British sea mammals research unit at St Andrews has discovered that Antarctic elephant seals can dive to 1,800 metres and stay submerged for up to two hours.

He told the British Association science festival, which opened in Leeds last week, that sensors tagged to the seals could follow them across huge tracts of sea, recording speed, depth and temperature.

The seals typically dived for about 30 minutes. "A seal can be away for half an hour or an hour, come to the surface for two or three minutes and do that again, and carry on that behaviour for weeks, and in some cases months at a time," Professor Fedak said.

How a warm-blooded marine mammal could survive dives of such duration and depth was a mystery. The seals seemed to be able to slow their heartbeat rate from 120 a minute to one a minute, and "shut down" the circulation of everything except the blood to the brain.

In some cases, the seals might have been taking a nap, at depths too great for predator killer whales and sharks. But often they were feeding, which required effort. Scientists could estimate the store of oxygen they took below with them, and the rate at which it could be spent — and the seals seemed to be staying down far longer than the budget should allow.

"They are using a set of tricks that we all can do. People, when



Deep sea diver . . . the breathtaking elephant seal

they fall in cold water, can survive for apparently ridiculous amounts of time. There are people who have stayed under water, resting quietly, for 15 to 17 minutes," said Prof Fedak.

Seals have refined these tools to an unprecedented degree, he said. "I know of no other animal that controls its circulation with the finesse that seals do."

Seals may hold the endurance records, but Tony Martin, also of the sea mammals research unit, told the festival that the beluga whales of the Arctic broke all records for risky navigation. They could stay under water for only about 20 minutes — but had learned to make huge journeys under polar ice 10m thick by finding tiny, transient holes in the summer ice. Satellite tracking studies of tagged whales were beginning to reveal clues.

One whale was out in ice-covered deep ocean, diving to 1,000m under the ice — a region where there was no food, Professor Martin said. "I think they must be using these deep dives to search the underside of the ice for the next breathing site."

"I think they are diving down, and allowing themselves to look up, metaphorically, to a large radius of ice. They have an amazing ability to pick out a particular noise. I think they must be listening to the telltale slop of water against the ice. That sound will only occur where you have got air."

A Country Diary

Phil Gates

***PIKESTON FELL*, Weardale: This evening the heather moorland was a gently undulating sea of pale purple, merging into the pearly grey heat haze on the horizon. We'd come to look for the colony of plasterer bees, *Colletes succinta*, that we found here several years ago. Then there were just a few hundred individuals, tunnelling into a small patch of sandy soil. Now this has become a major mining operation, with thousands of bees tunnelling into a 400m-long bank created by erosion from wind, rain and the wheels of farm vehicles.**

The bees' brief nesting season is synchronised with the flowering of the heather. While we watched, some bees shuttled between their nest holes and the heather blossom, carrying pollen and nectar as provisions for grubs that will spend the winter sealed in their underground tunnels. In other places frenzied mining activity was still under way. First a bee disappeared into a hole, then, a few seconds later, tiny spurts of sand erupted from the entrance as the miner reversed towards the daylight, kicking soil backwards as it worked its way to the surface. For a brief moment its black and white tail emerged, only to disappear again as the bee plunged back underground, to tunnel deeper. The dry, sandy soil makes for easy digging, but the tunnels are prone to frequent collapses, so the bees plaster the walls with a sticky coating to shore up the roof and walls.

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

***WHY* are Anglo-Saxons, unlike other nations, exceedingly tight-lipped about the size of their earnings?**

MIND your own business! — *Tim Hogan, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire*

***IF MURDER* was entirely legal, would society descend into anarchy, or would we be much nicer to each other?**

THOSE tempted to murder would not have to worry about arrest and prosecution, but they would still have to weigh up the risk of being killed in revenge by a friend or relative of the victim. Private revenge would not necessarily provide a deterrent weaker than that of the law. This is how things work today in many parts of the world — the Caucasus, for instance. One problem is how to end the inter-clan blood feuds that arise when deterrence fails. Another is how to protect travellers venturing far from their family and friends. The stranger is well advised to seek a local *konak* — that is, someone willing to take upon himself the obligation to avenge him if he is killed.

So would we be nicer to one another? Certainly we would be very nice to those whose protection we sought to win or retain. And we would take care not to harm others whom we believed to be well protected. — *Stephen Shenfield, Providence, Rhode Island, USA*

PROBABLY neither. Consider Colombia, today the country in which murder most approximates being a socially acceptable way of settling scores out of court. Murder remains a crime, of course, but the range of offences for which shooting somebody is acknowledged as par for the course has reached stunning proportions. There are entire academic sub-fields of psychology, sociology and other disciplines in Colombia devoted to trying to fathom why the country's populace has seized on vigilantism with such abandon.

All of this said, Colombians remain a wonderfully gracious people. It should also be pointed out that Colombia is a constitutional democracy, and has one of the proudest traditions of press freedom in Latin America. So not only is it possible for people to be nice to each other *and* tolerate murder on a grand scale; they can read all about it while accepting an ambient level of anarchy that one might describe as background noise. — *Dave Todd, Ottawa, Canada*

***IS* the UK the only country to have a shipping forecast on a major public radio network?**

SHIPPING forecast? "Rockall . . . Hebrides . . . Irish Sea . . ." Place and elemental circumstance this present moment. In Scotland we call it poetry. — *Alastair McIntosh, Fife, Scotland*

***WHICH* countries cater best for vegetarian tourists?**

IN 1989 I took a guided tour on the island of Sumatra in Indonesia. I informed the company that I booked with of my dietary peculiarity, but inwardly resigned myself to a week of eating boiled rice. However, every single establishment we stopped at had prepared an elaborate, sophisticated and separate meal just for me. I spent a week eating the most delicious, nutritious and aesthetically harmonious food I have ever encountered. Almost more importantly, I was not once given the freak treatment that has been recurrent ever since I did not have Spam in my school lunch box. — *Kate Bligh, Montreal, Quebec, Canada*

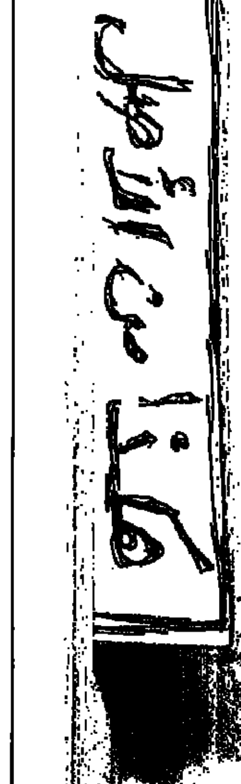
Any answers?

WHEN* I send a postcard to the UK from France I pay for a stamp in French francs, yet the delivery of the postcard involves the British postal authorities. How are the costs shared between the two postal services? — *Gerard Campbell, Macclesfield, Cheshire

HAS* bird song changed over the ages? How would we know? — *E Sienaert, Durban, South Africa

WHY* does reception of weak television signals improve when it is raining? What can I do to repeat the effect in dry weather — water the aerial? — *Matthew Cochrane, Skelmersdale, Lancashire

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/+44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. The Notes & Queries website is at http://nq.guardian.co.uk/



Wizard of the baton and disc

Georg Solti

THE 20th century has witnessed a revolution in the performing arts: conductors, actors, singers and instrumentalists have acquired an afterlife. Because performances can be recorded and edited, they may seem less ephemeral. But that changes the "judgment of history", which for performing artists used to depend on the reputation they enjoyed at death. The vast recorded legacy of Georg Solti, who has died aged 84, may or may not guarantee his status.

Critics could be unkind about him as an interpreter, while conceding his brilliance as an orchestral trainer and operatic music director. Like Herbert von Karajan, who had a very different style, political history and taste, Solti was both beneficiary and victim of promotional hype.

But Solti was more responsible about modern music and less commercially exploitative. For a Hungarian, the excellence of moderns like Bartók and Kodály was unarguable. As a conductor Solti suffered, perhaps, from being neither a composer nor a musical intellectual. He was essentially an instinctive, visceral wizard.

Solti's unique importance as a leading figure of musical culture in Europe and the United States is beyond argument. He was the first conductor to put Wagner's entire Ring on to a set of long-playing records (1965). He put the new postwar Covent Garden Opera on the international map. And, as he showed when he became music director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, he was one of the greatest orchestral trainers of the century.

But, as an interpreter, his qualities remained controversial. He could be a too-neurotic bundle of energy on the podium. Lack of relaxation — a reluctance to leave responsibility with the players — put out of reach the visionary vitality of Arturo Toscanini (whom he assisted in the 1930s) and the masterly detachment of Wilhelm Furtwängler, with whom he also worked.

At his best, his performances found an inspired inevitability. But there could be a scratchy doggedness. In Verdi and Mozart, who both count on the lyrical freedom of the singers, Solti was variable. In Richard Strauss, where the composer (himself a conductor) inscribed exactly what he wanted in the score, Solti's energy and devotion could be thrilling.

Decca's Ring set the standard for other interpretations. There was nothing comparable. Solti's earlier pioneering LP of Richard Strauss's Salome was equally a hi-fi landmark in 1962. Solti had been signed by Decca in 1947, his first British connection, and remained loyal to the label when it was casually sold to the German-Dutch multinational Polygram in the early 1980s.

Solti's pre-eminence as an LP name coincided with and related to his period as music director at London's Covent Garden. He was responsible for a transformation in the way the Covent Garden Opera (renamed the Royal Opera) perceived itself. He gave the company international standards and insisted on creating a professional artistic management.

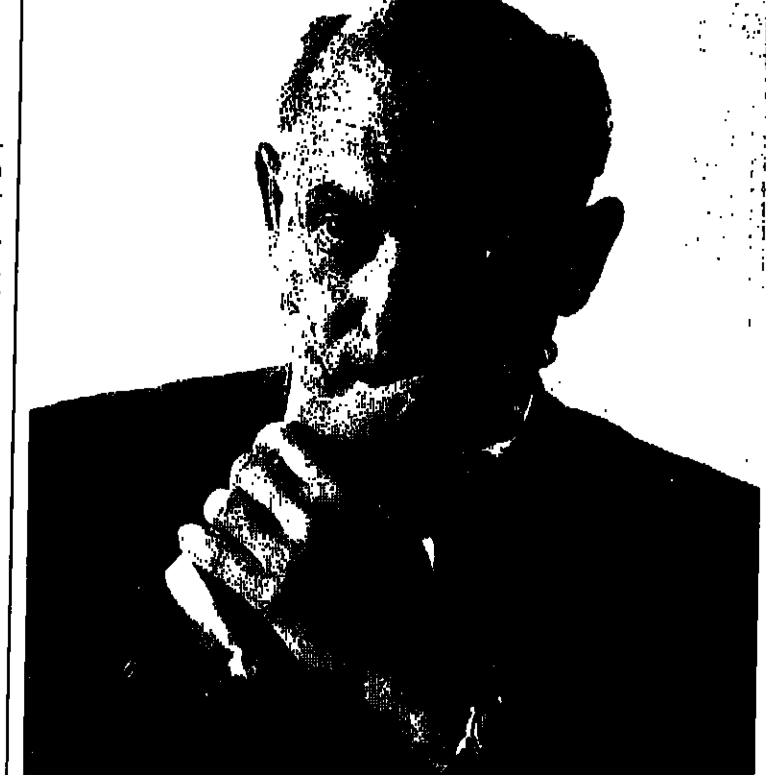
He introduced European assumptions about the artistic seriousness of the business, and of the importance of the opera in national life. He launched many new (or previously unheard) operas into the Garden's repertoire. He engaged Peter Hall as an opera director. He insisted that, to improve playing standards, women must be admitted to the orchestra for the first time.

Solti's first impressions, he later said, were that "there was no one there who knew anything at all about how to run an opera house". He insisted on enormous improvements and developed the budding international singing talents he discovered in the company.

In his performances at Covent Garden, he had no easy ride. A claque in the amphitheatre booed every curtain call he took and the critics admitted at best only modified rapture about his conducting.

Musical highlights of his Covent Garden work included a Strauss Arabella said to be "a glimpse of paradise" and, of course, the Ring staged by Hans Hotter.

Commentators were perennially searching for evidence that Solti had developed into something more like the great Germanic tradition. His later Mozart was appreciated more. He did The Magic Flute, Schoenberg's Moses and Aron, and Eugene Onegin, with productions by Peter Hall. The Schoenberg was only the third staging the work had ever received. His Otello was much praised. The most famous guest performance of his time was the Callas Tosca in 1963, with Franco Zeffirelli's world-class staging.



Georg Solti: essentially instinctive and visceral PHOTO: NEIL LIBBERT

It was remarkable that Solti gave himself so generously to the institution. But in London he put down his roots. In 1967 he married Valerie Pitts. In 1971 he was knighted, and in 1972 he took British nationality. In a speech on leaving the Garden he said: "You keep telling me what I have done for England. Look what England has done for me."

He was born Gyuri Stern in Budapest, Hungarian capital of the Hapsburg dual monarchy. His father abandoned the Jewish family name because of anti-Semitism. Solti was a prodigious child pianist and at 12 was giving recitals. He studied at the Franz Liszt Academy in the 1920s, where an astonishing collection of teachers included Székely, Kodály, Bartók, Dohnányi and Weiner. He decided (at 14) to become a conductor after hearing Erich Kleiber conduct Beethoven. In 1930, aged 18, he joined the Budapest Opera as repetiteur, starting on the prescribed path for would-be maestros.

Five years later he was assisting Bruno Walter in Salzburg, returning to the festival the following two years to help Toscanini prepare The Magic Flute and the Verdi Requiem. He made his operatic debut conducting The Marriage Of Figaro in Budapest at the age of 25.

It was an inauspicious time for a Jew to be launching a career in Hungary. But in 1939 he was invited to the Lucerne Festival by Toscanini to work with Walter and Adolf Busch: he got out of Hungary just two weeks before the border was closed by war. In Switzerland for the duration, he gave piano lessons and accompanied. Two years later, he managed to conduct a few concerts with the Swiss Radio Orchestra.

It is an irony that the peace was the making of his career — in Germany de-Nazification opened opportunities. The Americans occupying Munich wouldn't allow conductors who had collaborated with the Nazis to work, but they didn't want to be deprived of one of the advantages of Munich — going to the opera.

Almost all the great German names — apart from Erich Kleiber, the Buschs and Ebert — had done Goebbels's bidding. So Solti was sent for from Switzerland in 1946 to conduct Fidelio, perhaps aided by the American connection through Toscanini, and then became musical director of the Bavarian State Opera for six years. In 1952, at the age of 40, he moved to Frankfurt, staying for nine years until he went to Covent Garden.

His memory of what Peter Hall had represented as an innovator in his Covent Garden years lasted until their disastrous collaboration on Bayreuth's 1983 Ring, when Solti committed the inexplicable sacrilege of altering the orchestra's "cover" devised by Wagner — which accounts for the generally sublime balance there between voice and orchestra.

He made no attempt to redeem the wreck of that one-season experience. Perhaps he felt it was never meant to be: the ghosts of Karl Böhm and Furtwängler (whom Solti had also displaced in Munich after the war) were beyond appeasing.

AFTER 1947, armed with his Decca contract, he became a familiar guest conductor with almost all the major orchestras in the important venues: Edinburgh Festival 1952, Salzburg 1956, San Francisco 1953, Chicago Symphony Orchestra 1954, Glyndebourne 1954, New York Philharmonic 1957, Covent Garden 1959, the Met 1960.

Simultaneously with his London appointment in 1961 he was made music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. From 1971 Solti was chief conductor of the Chicago Symphony. From 1971-75 he was simultaneously music director of the Orchestre de Paris. In 1977 he became chief conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

He was always a keen study. His startling Messiah at the Festival Hall in the late 1980s was clearly influenced by the change of taste: early music and baroque performance. His first complete opera recording was Arabella in 1956; his first Mahler symphony was the Fourth in 1959 with the Concertgebouw. With the Chicago orchestra he tackled most of the Mahler, a Beethoven cycle, a huge range.

His stardom is amply documented in a huge corpus of recordings, which will be argued over for many years, of which the latest is Don Giovanni with Bryn Terfel.

Solti, in fact, was a last link with the generation of singers who achieved fame before the invention of the LP. He was the last maestro who served his apprenticeship between the wars.

Tom Sutcliffe

Georg (György) Solti, conductor, born October 21, 1912; died September 5, 1997

Arms and the well-read gentleman

Gen Sir John Hackett

GENERAL Sir John Hackett, who has died aged 86, was one of the last of the British intellectual gentleman soldiers. His military career culminated with him as both commander of the northern army group of Nato and commander-in-chief of the British Army of the Rhine. He was also principal of King's College, London.

A formidable writer on military subjects, ancient and modern, he will perhaps be most remembered for his co-authorship of the novel The Third World War (1978). This postulated a 1985 conflict as the Soviet Union began to disintegrate and the Russians tried to hold together their empire by expansionism. The book caught the ideological mood that accompanied the last Reagan-Thatcher era of the cold war in the 1980s.

Hackett had an unpretentious but piercing eye for a military situation. He believed that a crumbling, fragmented Soviet Union would lead to a more dangerous situation than the nuclear stalemate between the superpowers. The USSR may have vanished, but his diagnosis has yet to be disproved.

Hackett was an Australian by birth, the son of Sir John Winthrop Hackett, the owner of the Western Australian and Western Mail newspapers. He was educated at Geelong Grammar School — where Prince Charles briefly went — and New College, Oxford. He established himself as a formidable scholar, qualifying as an interpreter in French, German and Italian. These skills were crucial after he was commissioned in 1931 as an officer in the 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars.

In Palestine, in 1936, he was mentioned in dispatches, then seconded to the Trans-Jordan Frontier Force from 1937-41, where he was mentioned in dispatches twice. In 1941 he was wounded in Syria and again in the Western Desert, after he had formed and commanded the 4th Parachute Brigade. He was wounded yet again in Italy, in 1943, and once more in 1944, when he took part in the disastrous parachute landing on Arnhem in Holland, where the Germans were waiting. This formative experience was responsible for one of his most human books, I Was A Stranger (1977).

He became commander of the Trans-Jordan Frontier Force from 1947 to 1948, but with the end of the British Mandate in Palestine and the birth of Israel, he returned to western Europe, becoming commander of the 20th Armoured Brigade in 1954. Between 1960 and 1963 he was general officer commanding-in-chief of Northern Ireland; then deputy chief of the Imperial General Staff and of General Staff at the Ministry of Defence. Between 1966 and 1968 he was commander-in-chief of the British Army of the Rhine and commander of the Northern Army Group in Nato.

He fulfilled many instructional roles, including commandant of the Royal Military College of Science. Out of the army, he received press attention as principal of King's College, London — a post he took on in 1968, the high tide of student revolt, and he remained until 1975.

In 1942, he married Margaret Frena, an Austrian. They had one daughter, who died, and two adopted step-daughters.

Dennis Barker

General Sir John Hackett, soldier, born November 5, 1910; died September 9, 1997

Pop (up) art . . . one of the first people to buy Hirst's book said: 'I'm not so much a fan of his work as much as how he gets away with it'

Hirst's mutant is more hype than hybrid

ART
Adrian Searle

DAMIEN HIRST'S much hyped, enormous, expensive, pop-up book I Want To Spend The Rest Of My Life Everywhere, With Everyone, One To One, Always, Forever, Now, is the artist's fan letter to himself. An incomplete *catalogue raisonné* it is also part scrapbook and cuttings collection, part collected sayings, and — if you believe the hype — it is also an artwork in its own right. Like so much of Hirst's work, it is a hybrid, a mutant.

With its autopsy shots of suicides, spoof pharmacological catalogue layouts, inserts and extras to lose down the back of the sofa, its irritating graphic design subtleties, appendices and reproductions of hate mail, its pop-ups and pull-outs, this is the ultimate Hirst hand-job handbook.

There are lots of little designer treats and paper-engineering feats to jolly the thing along. Pull the slide and make a shark appear. Change the colours on a spot painting. Flood the sheep tank with ink. Raise Judas from the dead.

Everything you might want to know, and a lot you probably don't, is here, from a family snap of little Damien holding his first church missal, a Band-Aid on his knee, via precocious art school juvenilia to full-blooded Damien — the dear boy with a dead man's head; Damien with a chainsaw; Damien deified. The artist's thoughts pepper the pages — thoughts on smoking, on drugs, on genius, on life, love, death and fame, interspersed with glamour-shots of the work, blow-ups, details, entrails.

Damien Hirst is 32. This book is a mistake. It will age horribly, and then make a return as a symbol or a symptom of our terrible times. The copy I've been lent is already going baggy and saggy, wrinkled and worn; touched by life (and a few heavy-handed critics) it loses its allure. The book has become an inadvertent metaphor, signal to an early mid-life crisis and looming decay.

Jonathan Barnbrook's collaboration with the artist on the design is an unpleasant, cheapening makeover. It is busy, fussy and larded-up with effects. The good stuff — and some of Hirst's work is very good indeed — isn't aided by the graphics, while no amount of tinkering can make his weaker objects and images better than they are. The shocks become repetitive, the surprises nullified.

The idea that the artist can be at once a painter, sculptor, film-maker, essayist and aphorist, adman and media manipulating art star is not unappealing. It is what our times seem to want. But instead of achieving the title's ambition (or failing bravely), the book charts a kind of self-trivialisation. We begin quoting V S Naipaul, Samuel Beckett and Van Morrison, and end with a whimper: "I could make pets in formaldehyde for the rest of my life, but I won't." It is an utter disappointment.

Ford's model P

CINEMA
Richard Williams

IF GARY COOPER was mythical America's sheriff, then Harrison Ford is surely its president. Of all the actors called to the role, none has seemed better equipped to wield the instruments of power with the moral authority of which the nation dreams. And, like Cooper, Ford uses an air of weary reticence to convey the impression of a freighted conscience. This, we assume, is the inevitable burden of a man forced to bear the standard of righteousness.

Ford plays the president for the first time in Air Force One, but from the moment he appears we know that the part was always his. Ford is such a potent presence that almost all the residue of his career comes in useful here. Inside the president's dark grey suit beats the firm heart of the hunters and policemen of Witness, Blade Runner and the Indiana Jones series.

If Hollywood's major studios still made movies with the qualities invested in the likes of High Noon and Sergeant York, then Ford's president could have been a landmark performance. But since the height of the concept and the depth of the special-effects budget took over, effectively turning a movie like Air Force One into a cartoon, such simplicity of technique has come to seem two-dimensional. Robbed of its chance to speak and grow, it is just another reliable component in the expensive assembly built around an idea that was probably pitched by its writer in a single paragraph.

At a Moscow banquet, the president makes a speech celebrating the success of a joint mission to capture a mad-dog general who has been threatening to reconvene the Soviet Union. The president breaks away from his prepared text to promise that no more will his country withhold intervention until its own interests are imperilled. In future the attitude towards bullies and murderers will be one of zero tolerance.



Captain America . . . Harrison Ford to the rescue in Air Force One

Rushing from the Kremlin to the presidential Boeing, the president waves away the protests of his advisers before crumpling with exhaustion. He greets his family and prepares for the flight home. The First Lady (Wendy Crewson) appears to have stepped straight out of a Calvin Klein catalogue. The pubescent First Daughter (Liesel Matthews) is a miniature version. No one, least of all the First Dad, appears to know what a bad hair day is. This president, we can be sure, has never cut a dubious deal in his life, or inhaled so much as a cigarette. Later, to no surprise, we learn that he was a Vietnam hero. Whatever we have here, this is not Primary Colors.

His subordinates, unfortunately, are not made of the same stuff. You would have thought that somebody would have tipped the Secret Service off about Gary Oldman. Particularly Gary Oldman wearing a Lenin beard, accompanied by several men of similar appearance. But this, it is accepted, is a Russian TV news crew.

To be fair to the security men, Oldman waits all of half an hour before detonating the character's psychosis, which is about 25 minutes longer than he usually takes. His Ivan Korshunov is dedicated to rescuing the general and resurrecting the might of Mother Russia — or Rooshya, as Oldman puts it, trying to sustain a generic accent and sounding instead as though his lower jaw has broken loose.

In control of the plane after capturing or killing all the passengers except the president, Oldman treats us to his customary psychic storm. "What arrogance to think you could understand my intentions," he screams. "When the capitalists are dragged from the Kremlin and shot in the street, then you will know my intentions!"

Air Force One is directed by Wolfgang Petersen, who demonstrated his gift for creating claustrophobic tension 16 years ago with Das Boot. He redeploys the same skills as the president moves around the fuselage of the 747, trying to pick off the hijackers without endangering his family. But this is not 1981, and for the last third of the film the budget takes over as the plane skitters around a military airfield like a runaway shopping trolley, fends off MiG attacks and survives a spectacular in-flight accident.

This is, of course, spectacular nonsense, in which no actor is required to delve deeper than the briefest character outline. For the audience, a couple of hours pass amid bangs, crashes, and the semblance of tension. As Harrison Ford banks another $7 million and enters the second half of his sixth decade, does he pause to think about what might have been?

Life's a dream

THEATRE
Michael Billington

TIM SUPPLE'S Royal Shakespeare Company's touring version of *The Comedy Of Errors* ends its long life at the Young Vic, and it looks better than ever. Instead of the usual stylised romp, we get a piece of magic realism dwelling on dreams, madness, master-servant relationships and the emotional yearning for unity.

Supple sets the action squarely in Ephesus, a city biblically associated with witchcraft and today part of Turkey. The impending execution of the Syracusan merchant Aegeon therefore acquires a grisly plausibility. So, too, does the harshness of both the Antipholi towards their endlessly beaten, bald-pated servants. But the great thing about Supple's production is that it focuses less on the Plautine mistaken-identity gag than on the wonderment that comes from being familiarly greeted in a foreign land and from the sense that all existence is an illusion. In this version, life's a dream rather than a scream.

Occasionally, Adrian Lee's music dictates the mood rather than underscoring it. But that's a minor cavil in a refreshingly intelligent, unpatronising production in which Robert Bowman and Simon Coates (the Antipholi) and Dan Milne and Eric Mallett (the Dromios) are well matched.

While I found Anthony Neilson's *The Censor* (At the Royal Court) theatrically hypnotic, I was not totally persuaded by its argument. Like Ariel Dorfman's Reader, which excavates the guilt-ridden past of a literary censor, it comforts rather than challenges our liberal preconceptions.

The hero is a solitary, cuckolded obsessive, who occupies the bottom rung of some Kafkaesque bureaucratic ladder. A young woman who has made a sexually explicit movie comes before him to plead her case. Her line is that pornography is in the eye of the beholder: that even sexual literalism can be metaphoric and that "a penis is not just a penis". She physically ensnares the censor, hoping, by forcing him to confront his own darkest sexual fantasies, to change his way of seeing.

The idea is intriguing: that the best way to undermine the arbitrariness of censorship is to expose the censor's secret desires. But you can't help feeling Neilson loads the dice. The censor is an impotent wreck, while Fontaine is coolly controlled. She is, however, full of shit. She talks of a world in which anything can be shown anywhere (and you feel she has the author's blessing) but you need only apply her arguments to violence — snuff movies for all? — to see how absurd they are.

Yet I still enjoyed the experience. Neilson, who directs himself, gives the encounter an eerie, hermetic quality. But the day we have a world without guilt will be the day that art expires.

Bearing witness to a massacre

Julian Borger

A Safe Area: Srebrenica — Europe's Worst Massacre Since the Second World War
by David Rohde
Simon & Schuster 440pp £8.99

Srebrenica: Record of a War Crime
by Jan Willem Honig and Norbert Both Penguin 224pp £6.99

SREBRENICA is not a popular subject. It is the name of a town and a clutch of hills in eastern Bosnia where an atrocity was committed in July 1995, wrecking the comfortable assumption that Europe had somehow risen above barbarism.

The massacre at Srebrenica also revealed the shallowness of Western governments' commitment to the human rights of non-taxpayers. Nothing has been said or done to dispel the widespread suspicion that the murder of more than 7,000 Muslims by Serb troops in a United Nations-designated "safe area" could have been prevented with a small show of Nato's military might. Two years on, the awkward questions remain unanswered. The tragedy has been consigned to history, presumably with a sigh of relief from the politicians and United Nations officials involved.

In A Safe Area David Rohde endeavours to cut through the blanket of complacency, in the hope that some lessons might be drawn. If Britain's New Labour is serious about putting human rights back into foreign policy, this book should be essential reading.

From months of interviews with survivors, Serb soldiers and Dutch UN peacekeepers, Rohde, an American journalist who won the Pulitzer Prize for his work in Bosnia, reconstructs the chain of events moment by moment from July 6, when the Serb attack began, to the bulldozing of the bodies into mass graves 10 days later. It is journalism at its committed best — painstaking, compassionate, full of telling detail and rigorous in its judgments. It is also the first major account of the Bosnian war which allows the victims to tell their own stories.

The book opens with a description of Serb forces shelling UN observation posts, as they close in on the "safe area". The resulting panic within the enclave is tangible, mingled with a growing sense of betrayal as Muslim civilians and Dutch soldiers search the sky in vain for promised Nato air support.

At each agonising step, the use of air power is blocked by the UN hierarchy. When intervention is finally approved and Dutch bombers attempt a bombing run on some Serb tanks, the attacking force is already at the entrance to Srebrenica town — it is too late.

In Srebrenica: Record Of A War Crime, Honig and Both argue that the UN was a handy excuse for inaction, not its cause. The authors (Dutch defence and foreign policy experts) take the Clinton administration to task for the mismatch between its moral rhetoric on Bosnia and its refusal to risk American lives. Where Rohde differs from Honig and Both is his refusal to absolve the UN officials in former Yugoslavia who shrugged at the policy contradictions while continuing to draw their generous salaries.

The epilogue to A Safe Area makes depressing reading. The survivors of Srebrenica are still refugees grieving for lost families. The perpetrators of the massacre are still at large. General Mladic has retired to raise goats "named after the former UN commanders in Bosnia and the leaders of the Western world". We are still a long way from a final reckoning.

Imperial disdain

Nick Cohen

Virgin Islands: Essays 1992-1997
by Gore Vidal
Andre Deutsch 320pp £17.99

GORE VIDAL'S many victims have fought back by turning him into an impossible amalgam. On the one hand he is meant to be a snobbish and callous gossip who mocks the decent faith of "real" people in family, church and state. But because the supposedly cold aristocrat is also a thoroughly populist opponent of the corruption of American democracy and the waste of billions of dollars on its empire and armed forces, it has also become essential to brand him un-American ("he lives in Italy, you know") and a probable communist.

Vidal has been writing since the forties, and familiarity makes it easy to overlook his virtues. In his essays he sweeps from high generalisation to killer detail. There is a pleasure, which is not entirely malicious, in watching him fillet the bigots of the American right, time-serving academics, the powerful, corrupt, lazy and compromised. Vidal's combination of learning, wit and disdain gets into your blood. He can change the way you think — the only definition of a great writer that makes sense — and readers often find themselves quoting his aphorisms as their own.

The last essay in Virgin Islands is an account of the British general election campaign. It is a typical example of Vidal's work: wholly unscientific and completely accurate. Vidal notes that Rupert Murdoch has abandoned the Conservatives for Tony Blair and goes to see the Australian-turned-American tycoon's candidate in action. He notes that Peter Mandelson has "the insolent manner of one born to the top rung but three". Blair "as it turns out has no programme. But things will be better, he tells us. Afterwards, to every question he says simply, Trust Me."

Journalists ask Vidal if British politics is becoming Americanised: "Well you do resemble us in that you now have a single party with two right wings."

"Which is the more right wing?"

"One does not bring a measuring rod to Lilliput."

In the United States, the grouping of politicians into a single conservative party means that half the population in the world's greatest democracy does not bother to vote. This year the arrival of a conservative Labour party in the UK helped to produce the lowest turnout since the war — 71 per cent. If you are poor, there are still reasons why a Labour government is preferable to a Conservative government, but they are, well, Lilliputian.

Vidal's dismissal of an American political system dependent on corporate campaign donations produces a curious consequence. The allegedly cold and biting satirist treats Bill Clinton with pity and kindness. US leftists may despise the president for crawling to rich donors and apeing the brutal policies of the Republicans. But Vidal credits Clinton with daring to take on the "medical-pharmaceutical axis" by proposing an American national health service. The president failed and "the always touchy ownership of the United States felt it had been challenged by what were, after all — despite such lofty 'visible' titles as 'president' — mere employees." Clinton's name was blackened.

Elsewhere, there is a fine attack on John Updike's leaden style and self-pitying conservatism, which helps explain why attempting to get through an Updike novel is like trying to swim the Channel with your clothes on.

The only real fault is the publisher's blurb, which claims that "Virgin Islands concludes with an explosive revelation about the extent of US military involvement in the not-so-virginal British Isles which will send out shock waves of controversy". It will do nothing of the sort.

If you would like to order this book at the special price of £13.99 contact CultureShop (see page 29)


Ford: connoisseur of dislocated phone conversations PHOTO: JOHN REARDON

Prat heading for a fall

Tim Adams

Women with Men
by Richard Ford
Harvill 255pp £14.99

IT'S BEEN a long time since you could call Richard Ford a Dirty Realist. While the pressure and scope of his early fiction favoured spareness of utterance and took as its subject men and women who had forgotten what luck was and weren't about to remember, his more recent work, particularly the extraordinary Independence Day, delights in a complexity of articulation, piling clause on clause, and displays an obsession with the circumlocutions of human emotion. For all that, Ford remains a writer whose every tale could begin with the caveat he once used in Rock Springs: "This is not a happy story. I warn you."

The three long stories in Women With Men are at times acutely funny and mischievous, characters are held up to ridicule even when at their most exposed — none of which is the Richard Ford of old — but they are by no means happy stories. The first and last of them, "The Womanizer" and "Occidentals", take as their theme the American in Paris, and employ the time-honoured absurdities of new world meeting old, but cast in a distinctive bleak light.

All three are told by male protagonists who are unable to begin to understand women. Their misunderstandings take different forms, but in general signals exist only to be misinterpreted: they act on come-ons that aren't, and ignore brush-offs that are. The women, meanwhile, about whom we learn much by default, tend to maintain an attitude of resigned puzzlement.

In "The Womanizer" in particular Ford conveys, with scary precision, the torturous procedures that men use to convince themselves that they are not only romantic but worthy. His clownish narrator, Martin Austin, believes himself to have fallen in love on a business trip to France. Though there is no convincing evidence that his attraction is reciprocated, he is confident that the situation can be handled. Austin is, he is sure, a man of the world.

Ford enjoys proving that he is not. His demonstration begins with a phone call Austin makes to his wife. Ford is a connoisseur of dislocated telephone conversations, the mechanism by which modern relationships are tested.

Austin, in common with many of Ford's characters, having started out with what he perceives as not a lot, ends up with pretty much nothing, and only himself to blame.

There has always been a latent moralising tendency in Ford's writing, but in both of the Parisian stories here he hammers it home with uncharacteristic force, creating endings that leave little room for ambiguity — these men are weak and hopeless and they are seen to pay for it. This is a more pitiless Ford than that of, say, Rock Springs, where frailty tended to be qualified by sympathy.

High anxiety

Jim Perrin

Into Thin Air
by Jon Krakauer
Macmillan 293pp £16.99

TWO YEARS ago, at a high camp on one of the most beautiful and technically difficult peaks in the Himalayas, I watched as a high-altitude porter employed by a Korean expedition packed up a tent and all its contents, added it to his already considerable load and, breathing scarcely harder than he would have done at sea-level, ambled off sure-footedly down the route. He was a young Indian from one of the mountain villages of Himachal Pradesh. His aptitude brought home forcefully how flawed a project is much of what now passes for mountaineering in the world's greater ranges.

If I hadn't undergone that conversion to scepticism, then the events of last May on Everest, when the mountain reaped its worst death-toll in a single season, might have left me aghast. They didn't. Like many other observers in the mountaineering community, I looked on it as the disaster that had been waiting to happen, the unavoidable concomitant to a fashion for nannying rich, acquisitive and driven non-climbers into one of the most dangerous places on Earth.

But this wasn't just a disaster; it was an ethical morass, as the American climber Jon Krakauer makes clear in his rigorous first-hand account. He was sent by the magazine Outside to report on a commercial expedition to climb Everest by its easiest route. It was run by Rob Hall, whose firm, Adventure Consultants, had established a reputation for this work. Krakauer's initial stance regarding this trip, for which each client paid $65,000, is detached. He notes: "We were a team in name only . . . linked to one another by neither rope nor any deep sense of loyalty. Each client was in it for himself or herself."

This latter statement — the opposite of the traditional ethos of mountain adventure — is the crux of Krakauer's book. Rob Hall dies, as does Scott Fischer, the leader of a rival commercial group, because they do not accede to the debasement of their code.

A little storm, minor by Everest standards, in combination with a midden of small errors and unspoken rivalries, catches out guides and clients on the summit day. The rest is mayhem, heroism and loss, back lit by the nightmare image of Hall — oedemic and beyond help — speaking to his pregnant wife in New Zealand by radio link from his sketchy bivouac on the South Summit.

Into Thin Air demonstrates with agonising clarity how the deadly conjunction of commerce, ego and competition has dissipated the morality of an activity where selflessness and responsibility were once the commonplace.

Paperbacks

Nicholas Lezard

Blade Runner, by Scott Bukatman (BFI Modern Classics, £7.99)

GOSH, I love this series of books. They're so . . . short. Anyway, as eagle-eyed readers will have realised, this one's about Blade Runner. Bukatman is assistant professor of film studies at Stanford, and writes as you would imagine him to do: with a wide frame of reference, a certain confidence when using the word "postmodern", and a prose style that could have been written by one of the film's replicants. Still, he points out that the Harrison Ford character's name in the film, Deckard, is a homophone of "Descartes", and argues convincingly as to whether he is or is not a replicant. Deckard, that is, not Bukatman.

Mini Sagas, ed Brian Aldiss (Sutton, £7.99)

THE winners from the Daily Telegraph competition in which readers were invited to submit stories of exactly 50 words. The results are strangely compulsive reading, often the products of deranged and sinister sensibilities (there are a surprising number of stories hinge on sabotaged brakes).

Demonic Males: Apes and the Origins of Human Violence, by Richard Wrangham and Dale Peterson (Bloomsbury, £7.99)

WRANGHAM, a Harvard professor of anthropology, and Peterson, an English lecturer who has written the odd book about chimps, would seem to be amply qualified for the job of telling us that violence is common to primates (apparently even orangutans aren't boy scouts), and specifically male primates. Well researched and very much part of the current fad for looking at chimps to explain human traits. The solution apparently is to try and be wise and to listen to women more often. Hmm.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, trs and ed Michael Swanton (Dent, £12.99)

ANOTHER heroic work of scholarship, superbly translated and annotated. The beauty of the ASC is that the hacks only devoted about a paragraph to each year (and sometimes they were unsure as to which year they were writing about) so that each entry is a beautifully condensed record, up to the year 1154, of battles, deaths and natural disasters. In 892 a comet appeared but nothing happened.

Apart from the usual bloody Viking raids, that is. Favourite entry: "1058 . . . And here came a raiding ship-army from Norway; it is tedious to tell how it all happened."

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Pope John Paul II addressing an estimated crowd of 700,000 during an open-air mass in Paris last month PHOTOGRAPH: THOMAS COEX

A pope opera made in heaven

Christopher Hope

Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes
by Eamon Duffy
Yale 320pp £16.95

The Papacy by Paul Johnson
edited by Michael Walsh
Weidenfeld & Nicolson 216pp £25

The Pope's Elephant
by Silvio A. Bedini
Carcanet 320pp £30

THE PAPACY is a scandal — but then, in the best sense, so too is the faith it defends. Something dangerous, deeply unconventional. In our time uncomfortable beliefs tend to get whittled down and what begins as faith ends in television. So it's not surprising that the popes are being made into a mini-series. True stories of the Roman royals; 262 pontiffs in the two millennia since Saint Peter went to Rome and was crucified there, upside down.

Popes are best taken one at a time because each is alarming in his own way. But television needs them in batches. Run the popes together and you have a soap opera that can claim to have been made in heaven. But one you probably wouldn't want the kids to see. Here is every failing known to human kind: torture, bribery, nepotism, murder, lust, vengeance, sodomy, simony, exile and sudden death.

Every mini-series, like every faith, needs its book. Whichever conclave gave the job to Eamon Duffy, Reader in Church History at Magdalene College, Cambridge, made a wise decision. Duffy is a Catholic and says so. He is mindful of the power of the papacy — but not bowled over by it. He is also a wonderfully knowledgeable guide. He knows there is no need to sensationalise the popes; they do it so well themselves.

Perhaps that is why he tiptoes around the Renaissance popes. Many are strictly late-night, X-rated, anything-goes, parental guidance viewing. The Medicis seem more at home in the tabloids than the tabernacle. How easily they translate into screaming headlines. Something like: "We'll eat Pope warn rampaging Huns!" Or "I was Bonking Bishop's ninth love child!" (Alexander VI had a passion for mistresses and, oddly enough, sardines).

It took some three centuries before the Bishop of Rome became arbiter and authenticating source of spiritual truth. It is difficult to escape the impression that, in many ways, the great years were those when emperors like Nero to Diocletian persecuted the Christians with relentless cruelty. After the emperor Constantine converted to Christianity — around 312 AD, the Church came out of the catacombs, and walked straight into what Duffy calls the snakepit of Italian politics.

It was as if, once Rome went Christian, the successors of Peter the fisherman began suffering from a strangely schizophrenic dream: were they popes pretending to be emperors, or emperors pretending to be popes? The latter seems more likely. When the corruption, greed and lunacy of the Roman church was attacked by reforming clerics from Huss onwards, the popes unleashed a persecution as violent as anything the Romans had visited on the early church.

Duffy is very good on this contradiction. One of the great pleasures of Saints and Sinners is its frank and undefensive tone. Duffy neither patronises the reader nor panders to the papacy. Given the passion the papacy arouses and the amount of tosh it will generate as the millennium approaches, this is no small achievement.

There is a striking contrast between Saints and Sinners and The Papacy, by Paul Johnson. This collection of curiously inert, dutiful essays is less a book than a package. Although ascribed to Paul Johnson, The Papacy has been neither written nor edited by him. Instead it is topped and tailed with sermons; both of which wear the slightly pompous air of the Englishman about to talk religion. The papacy, Johnson declares, is "unique". The historian bows his head "in humble respect" and observes "in awe its endless splendours and shadows".

The popes have given us a word for this sort of thing — pontificating. Better The Pope's Elephant than his praise-singer. The only pope to keep an elephant was Leo X (1513-1521). Leo was a high-flyer: archbishop by the age of seven; cardinal at 12; pope at just 37. A cultivated man, patron of Raphael, he adored spending money and having fun, and said so: "God has given us the papacy, let us enjoy it!"

His elephant was named Hanno, a rare albino, given to Leo by Manuel I of Portugal. The story of Hanno was rediscovered in the papal archives by Silvio A Bedini. The Pope's Elephant is a charming and loopy story that survives the scholarly apparatus with which its author tries to weigh it down.

IF DOG-OWNERS are rumoured, sometimes, to look like their pets, Pope Leo grew to resemble his elephant; both were very large and suffered from constipation. He also loved astrology, silly games, watching his pet cheetah eating smaller furry prey, and inventing indulgences.

Duffy is very good on the indulgence racket. To raise fresh funds for the building of the greatest church in Christendom, Leo issued the St Peter's Indulgence. It was this particular act that so incensed an obscure German professor called Martin Luther. The St Peter's Indulgence was heavily sold: it was an early form of financial futures, a selling off of the Church's spiritual assets, a way of privatising the grace of God.

It's almost impossible to be dull about the popes. Odd, bent, saintly, demented — what a catalogue is here assembled. Would you buy a used indulgence from these men? Yet somehow the papacy survives, it works. And if we do not actually bow our heads in awe, we shake them in sheer disbelief; at times in admiration. The line between saints and sinners is often finely drawn.

Thus Pius XI (1922-1939) was an irascible autocrat, but he may also have been the greatest pope this century. Willing to shout down the German ambassador on the eve of the war and warn that no Christian could be an anti-semite. However, his successor Pius XII (1939-1958) began as an appeaser of Germany. When he learned of the murder of the Jews, whatever he may have said or done in private to counter the horror he never raised his voice above a whisper.

There is something reassuring in lavish display of human frailties we know as the papacy. The pope is not, has never been, a demigod. When he used to meet his papal master, it is reported that Hanno would genuflect and weep. The pope's white elephant was a better critic than he knew.

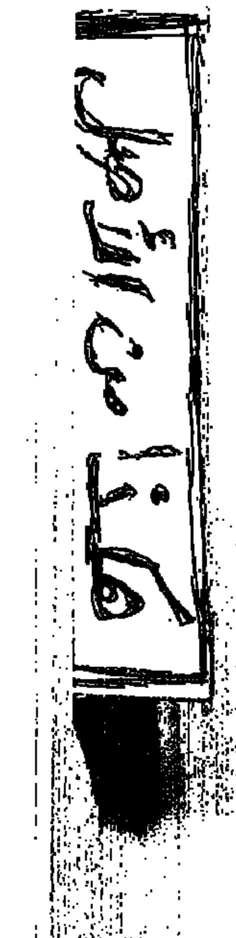


ILLUSTRATION: ANN HOBDAY

Foothold of the fire crow

Mark Cocker

CLOGHER HEAD on the end of the Dingle peninsula in the Irish county of Kerry was an impressive landscape. To the south of this rocky promontory was the village of Dunquin; offshore was a shoal of surf-corroded islets known as the Blaskets — the whole a panorama of dark, uptilted rock and drab moorland that formed such an eloquent and powerful background for David Lean's film Ryan's Daughter. We were standing at the westernmost extremity of the Irish mainland and indeed of all Europe. Further out there was nothing but the Atlantic Ocean, uninterrupted until the Newfoundland shoreline.

It was a coarse-grained place of wind, rock and water, and an unlikely location to find birds. (In fact, Ireland is impoverished compared with the British mainland, with more than 70 fewer breeding and more than 50 fewer resident species.) But, unexpectedly, there came towards us a flock of medium-sized birds skirting the upper edge of the headland. They cruised easily through the updraught, then a violent gust seemed to catch them unawares and they were flung like black rags over the crag ridge, their broad, fingered wings ballooning open as they swung down below eye level and up again. Then, with the winds buffeting harder, they paused utterly motionless, almost to prove that their earlier acrobatics had been a deliberate manoeuvre. With this absolute aerial mastery asserted, the birds surfed the breeze out over the breakers and disappeared around the next headland. As they did so they let out a long, triumphant "Ch-e-e-e-oww".

These creatures are one of the star birds of Ireland. Once called by the more resonant, poetic name of fire crow, they are now known as red-billed chough. In Britain, it is one of the rarest and most inaccessible breeding species, pushed geographically and numerically to the limits of survival, with only 315 pairs clinging to the outer fringes of the archipelago, on the offshore islands and coasts of Wales, Scotland and the Isle of Man. In England, it has been completely extinguished, lost in the 1970s from a final Cornish toehold. There is now no mainland population outside Wales.

That pattern of decline is mirrored across Europe, the chough vanishing in living memory from Austria and most of Switzerland. Serious declines have also occurred in its last two strongholds, Spain and Greece. Yet further east in the mountains of Asia, especially in the Himalayas and the mountains of Tibet, it remains relatively common. In Nepal, great flocks can still be seen, swirling like black dust devils above the crags and rockfaces of the northern highlands.

In these Asian strongholds the numbers have been protected by the remoteness of the landscapes and the moderate impact of their small human populations. Not that chough have been averse to man's presence. In fact, in Ireland and elsewhere in Europe, they originally benefited from the country's forest clearance undertaken by Neolithic people. Subsequent use of the cleared land for sheep and cattle was also positive, because chough feed largely on grassland invertebrates. Nor were they especially persecuted, being the most benign and appealing of an otherwise unpopular family, the corvids — crows, ravens and magpies.

What has blighted the chough's future has been the abandonment of these marginal lands or an intensification of farming methods, coupled with increasing recreational use of European coastlines. Yet on Ireland's long, salt-fretted Atlantic shore, the old grazing traditions are still being maintained. So much so that choughs have not only held their own with 800 pairs, but are now increasing.

Chess Leonard Barden

LAST month's Mind Sports Olympiad at the Royal Festival Hall in London proved another triumph for Michael Adams and Matthew Sadler, who followed up their British championship success by taking the gold and silver medals: Adams 12½/15, Sadler 11½, Gormally 11.

Adams was unbeaten, and it was interesting to observe the technique of one of the world's best exponents of 30-minute chess against the clock. He plays the opening simply and fast, is rarely under dire time pressure, often makes minor sacrifices of a pawn or uses an exchange to gain the initiative, and has a sure-footed endgame technique. It is a natural gift, honed by massive experience; Adams is probably the only top grandmaster who regularly plays in weekend and one-day congresses in his own country. He is as a superb role-model for younger players.

The Olympiad also offered medals and decent prize money for blitz and problem-solving contests. The best result by chess players came in the Decamentathlon, where nine other disciplines — including IQ, memory and creative thinking — were tested. Former chess internationals took all three medals.

B Lalic v J Hodgson

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 g6 6 Be4 Bg7 7 0-0. A diversion from the usual f3, Be3, Qd2 and 0-0-0 plan against the Dragon Sicilian. White develops quietly, a policy Karpov tried against the same opening 20 years ago.

0-0 8 Re1 b6?! This proves to weaken c6; Nc6 is normal. **9 Bg5 Bb7 10 Nd5 Nbd7** If Nxd5 11 exd5 Re8 12 Bb5 is unpleasant. **11 Ba6!** Brilliant opportunism, highlighting Black's weakness. If now Bxd5 12 exd5 Re8 13 Bb7 wins at least the exchange. **Bxa6 12 Nc6 Qe8 13 Ne7** The black queen is trapped (Qe8 14 Ne7+). Black struggled on for a while to save face, but effectively this is one of the all-time quickest wins in an all-grandmaster game.

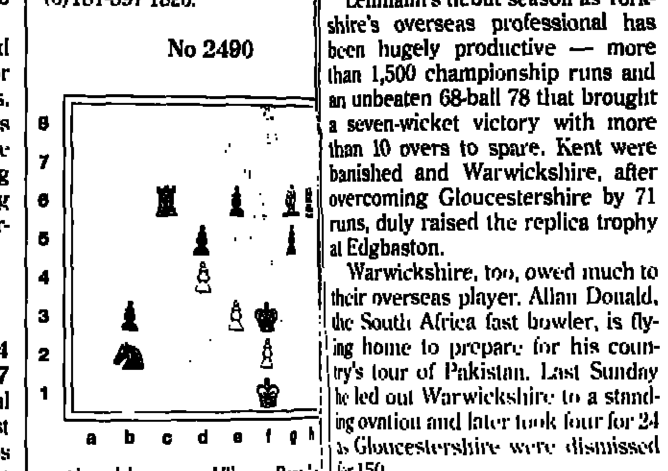
L McShane v N Timms

1 e4 c6 2 d3 d5 3 Nd2 dxe4 4 dxe4 g6 5 Ngf3 Bg4 6 Bc4 Bg7 7 Bxf7+ Kxf7 8 Ng5+ Kf8 9 Qxg4 Qd6? 10 Qe8+ Resigns.

A defeat such as this would crush many players for months afterwards, but a few days after this disastrous game its loser recovered to reach the final of the Rotary Challenge in which 23,000 children from 700 schools began play last autumn. The finals were staged as part of the Olympiad.

This event, in which any school can take part, is proving a fine source of new talent among boys and girls. For details of how to enter the 1997-98 UK Challenge contact Mike Basman, 7 Billockby Close, Chessington, Surrey KT9 2ED, United Kingdom. Tel: (0)181-397 1826.

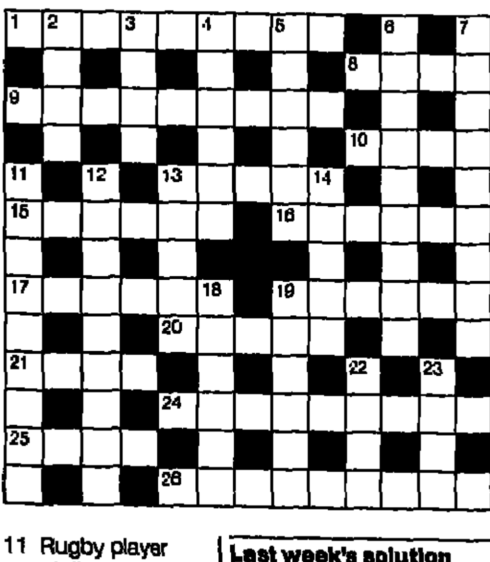
No 2490



Capablanca v Vilaro, Barcelona 1936. Capa was the best natural chess talent — he played fast and easily, and he lost only 8 per cent of his games. That's fewer than Kasparov, Karpov or Fischer. Here playing White (to move), Capa is a pawn down and threatened with Re1 mate during a simul against a dozen opponents. What should he play?

No 2489: 1 Na8 Kf5 2 Qa7! and Kxe6 3 Bc8, or Kf4 3 Qf2, or Ke4 Bc4. If 1 . . . Kg3/e3 2 Qxc3+ mates.

Quick crossword no. 384



Across

1 Be considerably taller than (5,4)
8 Increase (4)
9 One working with horses (6,3)
10 Musical work (4)
13 Flat — point (5)
15 Shut (6)
16 Stabbing knife (6)
17 Pressing (6)
19 Vaporise and condense (6)
20 Symbol — coin substitute (5)
21 Leader (4)
24 Craftsman (9)
25 Was untruthful (4)
26 Bold exploit (9)

Down

2 Curse — pledge (4)
3 River in Europe (4)
4 Began (6)
5 Worn away (6)
6 Breed (9)
7 Type of sponge cake (5,4)
11 Rugby player (5,4)
12 Solidified (9)
13 Was inclined (5)
14 "Dead" language (5)
18 Highly emotional (6)
19 Scorn (6)
22 Film — fog (4)
23 Rip (4)

Last week's solution

CASUAL AFRAID
AVAIL VICIOUS
LUNATIC SOLVE
HUMILIATE
TRUSS ABOLISH
ENTWINE ERECT
MARTYR BANTAM

Bridge Zia Mahmood

THE celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the independence of Pakistan last month included an international bridge tournament, so I returned to Karachi in the monsoon season. An exhibition match on the first day brought about the unique situation of players from India and Pakistan combining on the same team to face the rest of the world. This was a first for the subcontinent, and I hope the politicians noted that when we combined our talents we were not only amicable but victorious.

Indonesia, where bridge has a strong and passionate following,

	North	
	♠ 10 3	
	♥ K Q 8 5	
	♦ A Q 10 9 6 2	
	♣ K	
West		**East**
♠ Q 8 7 4		♠ J 6 2
♥ 3		♥ J 10 9 4
♦ 7 5		♦ K J 4
♣ Q 10 7 6 5 4		♣ A 8 2
	South	
	♠ A K 9 5	
	♥ A 7 6 2	
	♦ 8 3	
	♣ J 9 3	

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♥	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

won the main tournament, but for most of the locals, the big game was the "friendly" match between India and Pakistan, neighbours whose sporting rivalry arouses the ultimate in patriotic fervour. The Pakistan pair in the Closed Room were not pleased with their effort on the deal shown left.

South went one down because of the bad trump split and unlucky position in diamonds, but he had the feeling that he might have been able to scramble 10 tricks somehow. He need not have worried. This was the bidding at the other table:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♥	Pass	4♣(1)	Pass
4♠	Pass	4NT(2)	Pass
5♥	Pass	6♥	Dble
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Showing club shortage and a heart fit. (2) Blackwood with hearts agreed as trumps.

My partner, Masood Salim, wanted a club lead to go with his trump trick, so he doubled to suggest an unusual lead — certainly he would not be expecting me to lead dummy's singleton normally. I dutifully led a club, which Masood won to return a spade. South, hoping to make the contract, cashed the king and ace of hearts.

His hopes were dashed, but he pressed on with a finesse of the queen of diamonds. Masood won the king and led the jack of hearts. Declarer had made three tricks so far, and could have made another five via the aces of spades and diamonds, the queen of hearts and a couple of ruffs.

But, since four down doubled was not likely to be a good score, South in desperation won the third heart in dummy, crossed to the king of spades, and took another diamond finesse. Once Masood won with the jack, drew trumps, and we cashed the rest of the tricks for seven down and a penalty of 1,700.

Cricket Sunday League

Donald leaves on a high

By David Hopps and John Beaumont

KENT's experience of Headingley's unflattering wastes has been distressing. Displaced as county championship leaders by Glamorgan last Saturday, 24 hours later they conceded the Sunday League to Warwickshire as Darren Lehmann provided a thumping send-off to his season.

Lehmann's debut season as Yorkshire's overseas professional has been hugely productive — more than 1,500 championship runs and an unbeaten 68-ball 78 that brought a seven-wicket victory with more than 10 overs to spare. Kent were banished and Warwickshire, after overcoming Gloucestershire by 71 runs, duly raised the replica trophy at Edgbaston.

Warwickshire, too, owed much to their overseas player. Allan Donald, the South Africa fast bowler, is flying home to prepare for his country's tour of Pakistan. Last Sunday he led out Warwickshire to a standing ovation and later took four for 24 as Gloucestershire were dismissed for 150.

Donald said he hoped he might be back as the club's overseas player after the 1999 World Cup, though Sunday's triumph may be his swansong.

Spectators were kept informed of events at Headingley as they watched Warwickshire reach 221 for six, including a stylish 102 from Nick Knight. He had something to prove because two of Warwickshire's four defeats came under his captaincy in June, the second of them against Kent at Tunbridge Wells.

Knight's day . . . the Warwickshire opener shows his style PHOTO: RUI VIEIRA

He hit seven fours and a huge pulled six before he was run out by a direct hit from Tim Hancock. Knight shared an opening stand of 89 with Neil Smith (39), who captained the county to victory in 10 of the 11 games in which he was in charge.

Gladstone Small stifled Gloucestershire by conceding only 25 runs and Ashley Giles ran through the middle order with a season's-best four for 25 before Donald was brought back to polish off the tail and be chaired from the field.

Joy, then, for Warwickshire and despair for Kent. Following their defeat against Surrey in the Benson & Hedges Cup final the captain, Steve Marsh, is bracing himself for the condemnation that is certain to follow.

"They say we freeze on the big occasions, and quite rightly so," he said. "It was a poor performance all round. It might just work in our favour that we go into the last round of championship matches a point behind Glamorgan. At least we can claim to be underdogs."

Lehmann had the opportunity to outstrip his fellow Australian, Hampshire's opener Matthew Hayden, in the chase for the league's highest run aggregate. But Bradley Parker, as if caught up in the excitement of it all, slammed an unbeaten 39 from 27 balls and left him 12 runs short.

An eighth-wicket stand of 61 between Marsh and Paul Strang endeavoured to plot Kent an escape route. Strang, who struck 36 from 46 balls before being dismissed off the last ball, now returns to Zimbabwe.

Lehmann was irrepressible. Michael Bevan might feel betrayed because Yorkshire have reneged on a commitment to reappoint him next season, but Lehmann has matched him on the field and has been more relaxed and more popular off it.

Final League Table

	P	W	L	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Warks (4)	17	13	4	0	0	**52**
Kent (10)	17	12	4	0	1	**50**
Lancs (9)	17	10	4	1	2	**44**
Leics (12)	17	9	5	1	2	**42**
Surrey (1)	17	9	5	0	3	**42**
[illegible]	17	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	**40**
Essex (17)	17	[illegible]	6	1	[illegible]	**40**
Worcs [illegible]	17	[illegible]	6	1	2	**38**
Northants (6)	17	8	6	0	3	**38**
Yorks (3)	17	8	7	1		**36**
Gloucs (16)	17	7	6	0	4	**36**
Notts (2)	17	7	7	0	3	**34**
Glam (13)	17	5	9	0	3	**26**
Derbys (11)	17	4	9	0	4	**24**
Hants (15)	17	5	11	0	1	**22**
Middx (7)	17	3	10	1	3	**20**
Durham (18)	17	3	13	0	1	**14**
Sussex (14)	17	2	13	0	2	**12**

Counties reject big changes

Paul Weaver

THE first-class counties turned their backs on revolutionary change at Lord's on Monday, rejecting a plea from the England and Wales Cricket Board to adopt a two-division championship and opting instead for the "radical status quo", the current all-play-all format with an additional Super Cup one-day competition for the leading eight counties.

The vote was not as close as had been predicted. The First Class Forum — the 18 counties and MCC — was 12-7 in favour of the "enhanced Championship".

The Test match-hosting counties largely supported the idea of two divisions, with promotion and relegation for three sides, and Worcestershire were also known to support the scheme.

The lobby against two divisions was led, with some effect, by Peter Edwards, the Essex secretary, and Robin Marlar, the Sussex chairman.

The Super Cup, or Super Eights, will take place for the first time in 1999 based on next year's Championship placings. It will be a knock-out competition resembling the quarter-final stages of the Benson and Hedges Cup.

The year England host the World Cup, 1999, will also see the introduction of a two-division 50-over league, with promotion and relegation, plus the 60-over NatWest Trophy in its extended form as the game's "FA Cup".

The disappointed chairman of the ECB Lord MacLaurin said: "I am sad that the counties have gone against the idea of promotion and relegation. Cricket is an ultra-conservative game. But we have gone forward."

The Kent all-rounder Matthew Fleming, chairman of the Professional Cricketers' Association, echoed those sentiments. "I am disappointed," he said. "Seventy-five per cent of players had voted for a two divisional Championship."

The vote represented MacLaurin's second embarrassing defeat in a month. His three-conference Championship plan, outlined in last month's Raising The Standard blueprint, was thrown out by the counties.

But he discounted resignation: "I have 15 months of my two years to go, and hope to fulfil it before they throw me out."

Football results

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: Arsenal 4, Bolton 1; Barnsley 0, Aston Villa 3, Blackburn 3, Leeds 4; Coventry 1, Southampton 0, Crystal Palace 0, Chelsea 3; Derby Co 3, Everton 1; Leicester 3, Tottenham 0; Liverpool 2, Sheff Wed 1; Man Utd 2, West Ham 1; Newcastle 1, Wimbledon 3.

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE: Division One: Birminghm 0, Sunderland 1; Bradford 2, Middlesbro 2; Huddersfld 2, Ipswich 2, Norwich 1, Port Vale 0; Portsmth 2, Crewe 3; QPR 2, WBA 0; Reading 2, Oxford 1; Sheff Utd 1, Nottm For 0; Stoke 2, Stockport 1; Swndon 2, Tranmere 1; Wolves 3, Charlton 1.

Division Two: Bournemth 1, Luton 1; Bristol R 1, Gillingham 2; Fulham 0, Grimsby 2; Millwall 3, Southend 1. Oldham 2, Northmptn 2; Plymouth 0, Brentford 0; Preston 0, Walsall 0; Watford 2, Chesterfld 1; Wigan 3, Blackpool 0; Wrexham 2, Bristol City 1; Wycombe 1, Carlisle 4; York 3, Burnley 1.

Division Three: Brighton 0, Darlington 0, Cambridge 1, Barnet 3; Cardiff 2, Rochdale 1; Chester 2, Shrewsbry 0; Hartlepool 3, Torquay 0, Hull 0, Lincoln 2; Leyton O 1, Exeter 0, Macclesfld 3, Swansea 0; Notts Co 1, Mansfield 0; Rotherham 2, Peterboro 2. Scunthorpe 1, Doncaster 1.

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE:
Premiere Division: Dundee U 1, Kilmarnk 2; Hibernian 5, Dunfermline 2; Motherwell 2, Celtic 3; Rangers 3, Aberdeen 3; St Johnstone 1, Hearts 2.

First Division: Ayr 1, Dundee 2; Falkirk 1, Hamilton 4; Morton 1, Airdrie 1; Partick 1, Stirling A 2; Raith 2, St Mirren 1.

Second Division: Brechin 0, Livingston 2; Clydebank 1, E. Fife 2; Clyde 2, Stenhsmr 0, Queen Sth 0, Forfar 1; Inverness CT 2, Stranraer 2.

Third Division: Albion 2, Dumbarton 1; Alloa 5, Montrose 1; Arbroath 2, Ross Co 2; Cowdnbth 1, E. Stirling 0; Queens Pk 0, Berwick 0

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

England are tops

ENGLAND leapfrogged over Italy to the top of group two in the World Cup qualifying campaign after an emphatic 4-0 victory at Wembley over bottom team Moldova. England went ahead in the 28th minute through a Paul Scholes header from a David Beckham cross. The second goal came after half-time from a precise Paul Gascoigne pass to Ian Wright, whose shot rattled in at the goalkeeper's near post. Ten minutes from time, Gascoigne himself got the goal he so richly deserved. The rout was completed when Stan Collymore played a through ball that Wright easily converted. England now only have to draw with Italy in Rome next month to secure a place in next year's finals in France.

Meanwhile Northern Ireland's woes continued as Albania swept them aside in Zurich. The only goal of the match came in the 69th minute when a clearance from Colin Hill fell to Altin Haxhi, Albania's 22-year-old midfielder who plays for the Greek side Petros. His 20-yard shot beat Tommy Wright and bounced into the net off a post. It was Albania's first victory in group nine and also their first over Northern Ireland in eight encounters. The match was played in Switzerland because of the civil unrest in Albania.

DERBYSHIRE duo Devon Malcolm and Dominic Cork have been overlooked for England's winter tour of the West Indies. The pacemen have been replaced by Angus Fraser of Middlesex and Ashley Cowan, the 22-year-old Essex seamer who is the only uncapped member of the 16-strong party.

Adam Hollioake has been handed the chance to lead England into the 1999 World Cup after being named captain for the one-day tournament in Sharjah, where England will play India, Pakistan and the West Indies in a quadrangular tournament in December. The Surrey all-rounder led England A in Australia last winter and was given his expected promotion when the squads were announced at Lords' last week. England's A team will tour Sri Lanka and Kenya in the winter and will be led by Warwickshire's Nick Knight.

The squad for the Caribbean tour is: Atherton, Hussain, Butcher, Caddick, Cowan, Crawley, Croft, Fraser, Gough, Headley, A Hollioake, Ramprakash, Russell, Stewart, Thorpe and Tufnell.

JACK SIMMONS, the former Lancashire off-spinner who played for the county for 22 years, has been named chairman of the club after Bob Bennett's decision to concentrate on his duties as chairman of England's management committee. Simmons, who helped Lancashire to victory in two John Player League campaigns, four Gillette Cups and a Benson & Hedges Cup, said: "I'm absolutely delighted. I hope that we can make Lancashire the envy of all other county clubs."

ROBIN REID collapsed in his dressing room at Widnes after his bruising split-decision points victory over France's Hassine Cherifi. The 25-year-old retained his World Boxing Council super-middleweight title but was given the hardest fight of his career by the European middleweight champion. The British boxer was near exhaustion at the finish. Reid did not lose consciousness but after collapsing he was given oxygen to counter dehydration and taken to a Merseyside hospital for observation.

GREG RUSEDSKI has become the first British man to reach the world's tennis top 10 since the ranking system was introduced in 1973. The runner-up in the US Open aims to qualify for the ATP World Championship finals in Hanover in November. To achieve that, the British No 1 will have to be in the top eight of the world élite. "There's a good opportunity because we'll be moving to the indoor season, which suits my game," said Rusedski, who next plays in the Grand Slam Cup in Munich.

Britain's No 2, Tim Henman, meanwhile, sealed the second ATP



Henman . . . Tashkent victory

tour title of his career after beating Mark Rosset of Switzerland 7-6, 6-4 in the President's Cup in Tashkent. It was sweet revenge for Henman because Rosset was the victor when the two met in the final of the European Community Championship seven months ago. The victory, though, is unlikely to lift the Briton from his current position of World No 20 as Spain's Albert Costa, ranked 19, won the ATP Open in Marbella.

CANADIAN horserider Claire Smith was airlifted to hospital in Northampton after being injured in a fall during the European Championships at Burghley. Riding Gordon Gibbons, she fell at the Leaf Pit Log, a near-vertical obstacle and probably the most demanding jump on the course. She was said to be "comfortable" in hospital. It was the second serious accident in less than a week in this high-risk sport. Earlier at Blenheim, Sam Moore, a 35-year-old Irish rider, was killed when his horse fell and rolled on him.

Last Sunday, Britain retained the European Horse Trials Championship. The New Zealand team took the silver medals, and Sweden the bronze.

AUSTRALIAN motor-cyclist Michael Doohan broke Giacomo Agostini's 25-year-old record of 11 wins in a season when he held off the local riders Carlos Checa and Alex Criville to win the Catalunya Grand Prix in Spain.